HOW, WHEN AND BY WHOM WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN

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When, How, and By Whom Was the Bible Written

BY

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WITH INTRODUCTION BY

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PREFACE.

"Of making many books on the Bible there is no end." And why should there be until there is an end to making books against the Bible? But the author of the following pages did not originally intend to publish their contents. They were first prepared and delivered as a series of Sunday evening sermons to his own congregation—which, in the evening, is largely composed of a promiscuous gathering.

Not even the very encouraging reception they then met with decided him to publish them in book form; for, what may be listened to appreciatively is not always acceptable to a wider circle of readers. But many hearers of them when delivered expressed themselves as having been so much benefited by them; some who were doubters of the Bible acknowledged that many of their doubts had been removed and their objections met on hearing the discourses. One of the series was preached at Presbytery, and the brethren unanimously requested that it be published and circulated to help counteract the sceptical tendencies of the present day. Others whose judgment in such matters is worthy of the greatest respect and confidence, urged the publication of the series, and believing that such truths are much needed in the church and the world, he resolved to try how much they are wanted.

There is no pretense to originality in the book, and no one chapter is treated exhaustively; indeed, it is freely admitted, the discussion is necessarily fragmentary and incomplete. The author, in the midst of a pastorate, with many exacting claims, has merely availed himself, through research and study of evidence, ancient and modern, in support of the historic character and inspiration of the original text of the Bible, and presented it in his own style. He has culled from many fields, and expresses himself as under special obligation to the historic and scientific works of Prof. Sayce, Sir Wm. Dawson, and others who have made the Christian world their debtor by their invaluable contributions (almost demonstrations) in support of Biblical truth.

While this volume will probably satisfy neither the higher nor the lower school of Biblical criticism, his investigation has led the writer towards the "golden mean" which is generally nearest the truth. He has aimed at allowing the facts of history and science to speak for themselves. He has not written merely for the learned professor, for the critical preacher, nor for the self-satisfied sceptic, but for the large mass of churchgoers and non-churchgoers who honestly desire more light on the obscure question, "Whence came our Old and New Testaments?" In doing so he has kept as free as possible from the use of the technical terms used generally in philosophical and theological discussions. He desires to express his thanks to his friends Ira D. Jennings, B. A. and Rev. W. D. Thomas, Ph. D., D. D. for their highly valued assistance in reading the manuscript and for their many helpful suggestions. Dr.

Thomas also kindly wrote an Introduction for which the author is grateful; and in the hope and prayer that Providence may use these pages in restoring the Bible to its rightful place in perplexed and doubting minds; and in confirming the faith of the weak and wavering they are given to the public. J. T.

CONTENTS.

Chapter.

I. When was the Bible Written? . . 13

II. By Whom was the Bible Written? . . 28

III. The Old Testament Manuscripts—as History. 44

IV. The Old Testament Manuscripts—as Prophecy. 57

V. The Writings of the New Testament, Especially its Undisputed Writings. 69

VI. The Story of the Manuscripts of the Bible. 80

VII. When and How was the Bible Canonized? 93

VIII. The Bible versus its Critics. . . 106

(*a*) Its Scientific Critics.

(*b*) Its Textual Critics.

IX. The Bible versus its Critics, continued. 123

(*a*) The Critics of its Moral Teachings.

(*b*) The Critics of its Social Teachings.

X. What is the Bible to Us? . . . 138

INTRODUCTION.

No book has had so much written concerning it as the Bible. Out of the fire of persecution it has come forth, whatever dross it had alone burned away, clad in the youth and perfection of heaven, and girt afresh for its God-sent mission. The preacher and pastor, from the nature of his vocation, has to do most of his thinking in a fragmentary fashion; he comes from week to week before his people and dispenses truth *piecemeal* concerning God and man, time and eternity, sin and redemption. As the result of fragmentary thinking we have some of the choicest thoughts in our literature Conspicuous among them we may mention Eckermann's "Conversations with Goethe," Coleridge's "Table-talk," Pascal's "Thoughts," Southey's "Commonplace Book,' and Dr. Holmes' unrivalled gem of philosophy and wit, "The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table."

This volume is the product of searching and earnest thought on the great question of a supernatural revelation, and was delivered during several successive Sabbath evenings to the people of the author's own charge It is constructive; it builds up but does not tear down; it is made in the interest of conservative criticism, and shows that faith in the Bible is not only rational, but also ennobling and uplifting. It is written, not for the

learned few, but for the great mass of men and women who profoundly ask the question, "Has God spoken in very deed to man?" All the salient features of the critical assault upon the Bible come here under review: *manuscripts, original languages, integrity of its contents, authorship, compilation, editorial work, inspiration,* and *revelation*—all are ably sifted, cast into the crucible, and brought forth by the authors with the stamp of eternal truth on them.

Our age is vacillating, disintegrating, casts doubts on the essentials of our holy religion: this book has the true ring to it; it is positive, constructive, and stands up for the great verities of history, of human nature, of philosophy, and of the scheme of redemption as unfolded in the pages of the Bible. I had the pleasure of reading this volume in manuscript and felt that it would fill an important niche in the religious life of our age. A book that meets the sceptic face to face on his own ground, that finds the granite rock of truth and builds thereon the indestructible superstructure of a divine revelation, and that brings the sinner to the helpful touch of the Almighty Savior is surely worthy of earnest thought, and this volume does it in a convincing, vigorous, manly fashion. I trust it will find, as it richly deserves, a large circle of readers.

The old Bible—by whose truths our forefathers molded their lives and on whose great and precious promises they pillowed their feverish hearts in death—that tells

us of God's doings in creation, in providence, in history, and in redemption is here shown to be still true. Our confidence in it now is greater than ever, and all we need is to transform its precious precepts into the deeds of life to know and to feel that it is a *supernatural message* from God to His lost child—man. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

W. D. THOMAS.

La Crosse, Wis.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN?

"And the Lord said unto Moses, write thou these words." Moses.

Sir Walter Scott on his dying bed said to Lockhart his friend, "Bring me the book." In reply, Lockhart asked, "What book?" But though Scott was a genius who knew most books, he answered, "Lockhart, there is only one book—the Bible."

Thomas Carlyle said, "The Bible is all men's book."

John Ruskin said concerning it, "This book has been the accepted guide of the moral intelligence of Europe for some fifteen hundred years."

Justice David Brewer testified of it, "No book contains more truths, or is more worthy of confidence than the Bible."

William Ewart Gladstone spoke of it, "I have served my country for sixty years, and been a prominent member of its government for over forty years. In that time I have mingled with the master minds of this world, and I know of only five who do not accept the Bible, and the God, and the Christ of the Bible."

It is this book of which I propose giving a brief account: this book, whose disciples with a few exceptions form the empire of genius, the realm of intellect, and the fabric of morals and religion—the book acknowledged by the greatest minds to be the best book in the best age of the world's history.

When, how, and by whom, did mankind receive this Bible?

The first and second chapters of this volume shall merely narrate the answer to that question without regard to evidence, and the following chapters shall attempt to prove the narrative.

The Bible consists of a collection of sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old, and twenty-seven in the New Testament. The large preponderance of recognized writers on this question tell us the Old Testament books were given to the world during a period of 1,500 years before Christ. But it is almost beyond question that the book of Job was written at a much earlier date. At the dawn of Israelitish history Abraham was called to go forth from his Chaldean home to the promised land of his age, and with the going forth of this patriarch began the writing of this Bible. The historical portions of the book form, in large part, a history of the Israelitish people in their relations to God, and to the nations with whom they came into contact. It was not, however, a final and complete history of those relations, but one in process of development, which pointed to a future and fuller unfolding of them. It is such a history of man in the family, of man in the nation, of man in the wider sphere of the world; a history with its universal application for all time to man, in all his relationships of human life. Hence the development of this history must be coextensive with human experience, and the progress of its truth may be as great as the march of thought without occasioning any surprise in the minds of the most devout believers.

Abraham was the principal founder of these relations of which the Old Testament is in such large part a history. Indeed, so strongly is this thought emphasized in the Bible that he is called, "the Father of God's Faithful." Therefore the reasonableness of Abraham writing his own family history, in an intelligible, though it may be abbreviated form, can hardly be rationally gainsaid. The authorship of the first five books of the Bible is, we believe, accurately ascribed to Moses: but there is no reasonable doubt, that Moses used in his writings all the necessary material which history had placed at his disposal.

Indeed, such material available for both Moses and Abraham must have been very considerable. For, whether the deluge was universal or local in its extent, whether the Babel of tongues was natural or supernatural, whether the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah was miraculous or not, that these things occurred somehow is a matter of history apart from the Bible narrative. The excoriated landscape still visible around that valley of Sodom, the universal testimony given by expert geologists, and the recently discovered imperishable stone writings of nations contemporaneous with these people prove these narratives historical by whomsoever written. By these facts the historic character of even the pre-Mosaic portions of the Bible is verified, their literary sources revealed, and the time when they were written.

It is sometimes objected that the peoples of those days were too primitive to know the art of writing. But it shall be shown in other parts of this book that long

before the days of Abraham those eastern people from whence he came forth had attained to a very creditable state of civilization.

It is unreasonable to suppose that in such a condition of society Abraham was ignorant of this art. He was the appointed patriarch of a believing race, and the principal incidents in his life, which was so noble, and was designed to be the uplifting force of his generation would be compiled and recorded by competent hands to teach the unborn hosts. That this was done is suggested in the command to Moses "to write in the book of *memorial*." This "memorial" book was doubtless the historic record of God's dealings with Israel since the call of Abraham, and we read that Moses commanded that those records be continued. As the material accumulated it would become necessary to condense the writings, and narrate only the most important events. Also those incidents relating more especially to the religious life of the people would naturally find a place in such a book. For in this Bible as the history of man develops, religion is shown to be the soul of history, the central power in the affairs of the nation, the deepest foundation of human life. Doubtless the necessary abridgement of the narratives accounts to some extent for the Mosaic legislation being recorded piece-meal, and mingled with the history of the wilderness period. A careful reading of the five books of Moses reveals that they were largely written as the history was made, and not as Bancroft wrote the history of the United States, and much of the ceremonial legislation for those people was passed to suit their immedi-

ate needs. As a proof of this the eminent naturalist Dr. Tristram has observed that the list of clean and unclean beasts contained in the 14th chapter of Deuteronomy mentions nine different animals which are not referred to in the parallel passage in Leviticus. Six of these are animals still to be found in the wilderness, and in the eastern plateau, and could never have been inhabitants of the hilly, wooded, and cultivated Western Palestine, nor of Egypt. They are birds exclusively of the desert open plain, or of bare rocky heights, and were added to the list mentioned in Deuteronomy after they had been met with in the wilderness, and many years journeyings there had made the Israelites familiar with them. Moreover, as Sir Wm. Dawson has pointed out, the book of Exodus is an Egyptian book, which contains numerous words and phrases descriptive of Egyptian manners, and colored with Israelitish ideas of desert life. For example, the plagues narrated in the book of Exodus are nearly all natives of the climate and soil of Egypt. It is plain that the golden calf set up at the foot of Mount Sinai by the rebellious Israelites is Egyptian, and was made in imitation of the Egyptian deity—Apis. If we observe the references of the writer to the Pharaohs, to the Nile whose waters were turned into blood, if we think upon these revelations of Egyptian tyranny and civilization, we believe common sense —without either scholarship, or religious faith—compels us to decide that in this book we have an account of a forced exodus of people from lower Egypt when that country was in a high state of civilization and prosperity. Indeed, so real is the narrative that one of the

strongest opponents to the inspiration of the Bible admits that it contains nothing which does not correspond with the court of Pharaoh. Huxley himself said, "The book of the Exodus is the best guide book to Egypt." Now, if we can find the time when the exodus from Egypt took place, we can tell when the first five books of our Bible were given to us. This may be done approximately though the exact time cannot be stated with absolute certainty.

There is the strongest possible evidence that the Hyksos—the Shepherd kings of Egypt—reigned in the time of Abraham. Manetho, an ancient, yet a reliable Egyptian historian, informs us that these kings reigned for a little over two centuries, and were succeeded by the eighteenth succession or dynasty of native Egyptian kings. Soon after this, Joseph, the Hebrew, came to Egypt, and Jacob his father, and his family, settled there in the time of Thothmes III., one of the greatest kings of that succession. A revolution soon afterwards occurred which resulted in introducing a new dynasty of which Rameses I. and Rameses II. were the earliest kings. These were the kings or Pharoahs who "knew not Joseph." They were the Napoleons of Egypt and powerful oppressors of the subject races. Maneptah succeeded Rameses II., and according to the papyrus recently discovered by Harris, there occurred at that time a great exodus from Egypt which was followed by national anarchy. Therefore, it is almost certain that the Pharoah named Siptah Maneptah, otherwise spoken of as Amenophis, (or Merenptah), was the ruler when the Israelites left Egypt, in the

13th century B. C.[1] It is also as certain as that Lee surrendered to Grant that the exodus took place sometime during the four short reigns which succeeded that of Rameses II., and that the five books of Moses were written about 1300 years before Christ.

Indeed, if we are to have a historical basis for the Scriptures, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to find another period of time—other than the wilderness years of these Israelites—when the Mosaic and Levitical legislation could have been appropriately enacted for, and imposed upon, these people, with either reason or effective purpose.

And just as these writings were begun, so were they continued to be given, and also preserved, as the history of the people produced them, and their circumstances required additional revelation.

The writings of Moses were deposited in the ark or in some other safe place, and most sacredly guarded. Joshua wrote when it became necessary, and added the important facts of the growing history. His book was added to the five previously written, and thus was formed the Hexateuch. The first six books of the Bible contain the law, the religious ceremonies to be observed, and the noteworthy history of the nation: and for centuries afterwards these formed the inspired book for these Israelites in their new and conquered land.

The books of the Judges, of Ruth, and of Samuel, are also almost entirely historical, and cover a period of time

[1] See "Pharaoh of the Hard Heart," by Prof. Petrie, in the Century for August, 1896.

generally estimated at about 400 years after the entrance to Canaan. The altered conditions of the people are clearly set forth in the recorded history contained in these books. The government of the kingdom by judges, the increased liberties enjoyed by both rulers and people, their contamination by the idolatrous worship of their heathen neighbors, and their ultimate desire for a monarch to rule over them, are all fully described. That they were afterwards preserved to the nation is evident from the references made, by the successive writers of the Scriptures, to Moses and Aaron, to the commandments, and the ordinances which had been left for the people, as also from the development of the religious life and history of the Israelites therein revealed.

As we read the books of the Kings, we find higher ideals concerning both self government and God had been reached. This record to posterity is also an epitomized history covering another period of 450 years from the last days of King David to the beginning of the exile of the Israelites into Babylon. A single paragraph in the closing verses of this book records an incident which throws much light on the time when it was written. In 2nd Kings, ch. 25th, and v. 27th, we read, " Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison." "And he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life." Now there is abundance of history to show that this reign began 561 years before Christ. Therefore, if we suppose the reign reached the limit of an ordinary

generation, the latter part at least of the book must have been written between 561 and 538 B. C.. And this period of time of which the book or books of Kings contain the history, is most interesting in value to all lovers of the Bible, and should be so also to all who appreciate literature. During those centuries some of the greater prophets spake their matchless utterances, the Psalms, inimitable as poetic gems, were written and sung, the magnificent temple of Solomon was built, and its gorgeous services, typical and predictive of the coming Messiah and our glorious Christianity, were inaugurated. These 500 years—from the eleventh century B. C. to the captivity—form the richest period in Jewish literature, the most spiritual era of the Jewish church, and as a consequence the grandest epoch of the nation's chequered history.

The Proverbs and Ecclesiastes were also written during this period. The books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Esther were written during the captivity. Ezra, and Nehemiah, and probably the Chronicles were written after the return from Babylon to Judea, or between the fifth and fourth centuries B. C., though the Chronicles contain the genealogy of the Hebrew race, as also the brief history of that nation.

After the return of the Israelites from captivity, there is an unbroken connection between the Bible and contemporary literature. There was ready access to the Old Testament Scriptures in the service of the second temple. Nehemiah and Ezra, who represented and conserved in their age all that was best in Jewish life, were contemporaneous with Herodotus. Therefore, the writ-

ings of the various authors of the Old Testament Scriptures are placed within the reach of all, and as matters of history are at least as reliable as that seldom disputed Egyptian historian. King Josiah discovered the Scripture writings before the captivity; Ezra afterwards read the law, and with Nehemiah, and the great men of the Jewish synagogue formed a canon of Old Testament Scriptures about 420 years before Christ. These were afterwards read daily in the synagogue and temple service of the Jewish Church.

However, the books of the Old Testament were not written in the order of time which their arrangement in the Bible seems to indicate. It seems beyond question that the books of the later prophets were written before the book of Kings. Isaiah had doubtless written about three centuries before the Jewish canon of Scripture was formed. Joel, Hosea, and Amos were his contemporaries. Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah had been dead for over 150 years. But probably without any regard to the order in which they were written, Nehemiah and others collected and arranged them, and placed them in the library of the temple in which form they have been transmitted to their posterity.

However, the book of Job requires a special word in passing. It contains scarcely one word which justifies its having been placed where it is among the other books of the Bible. There is nothing Jewish in it. In every particular, in style, form and matter it differs essentially from all the other books of the Bible. It has no religious types to set forth, no history to narrate, only that of a lone man's blood-red struggles with the

woes of life, as he battles to reconcile them philosophically with the hidden benevolence of his God.

The strongest evidence places Job between Abraham and Moses, or about 1700 years before Christ. Job's comforters, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Elihu—were without doubt descendants of Abraham, who occupied the territory towards the Persian Gulf. Indeed, it is of the highest probability that they lived in the days immediately following Abraham, and long before Moses, though the book is placed long after the Pentateuch.

For four centuries before Christ nothing was added to the Hebrew Bible. Through this stormy period which began upon the division of the Empire of Alexander the Great, when Palestine became a province of Syria, down to our Savior's coming, these books were most providentially preserved. Though many attempts were made to destroy every sacred roll of the Jewish people, the Septuagint version of the Old Testament Scriptures was given, which translation secured certainty to their existence until the birth of our Lord.

The New Testament Scriptures are commonly believed to have been written in the order in which we have them in the Bible. But that is a popular misapprehension of the facts. Several epistles were written before any of the gospels, and the gospel by St. John is the latest production of the sacred books.

The earliest of the New Testament writings is the first letter by Paul to the Thessalonians, which was written about the year 51 of the Christian era, and his second epistle to the same church followed soon after. In the spring of the year 52 A. D., he wrote his first

and second letters to the Corinthians, and in 58 he wrote his epistle to the Galatians. The following year he wrote his celebrated letter to the Romans. During his imprisonment he wrote to the Colossians, the Ephesians, the Philippians and to Philemon. After his release from his first imprisonment he seems to have gone westward as far as Spain, and then east as far as Asia Minor, preaching the gospel; during which time he wrote his first letters to Timothy and Titus. Soon afterwards he was re-arrested, and again thrown into a Roman dungeon, where, in the Spring of 68 A. D., a short time before his death, he wrote the second epistle to Timothy.

The gospel by Mark must have been written before the year 70, and those of Matthew and Luke before the year 80. The Acts of the Apostles were written before the gospel by St. Luke, and the epistles of John—also the Revelation—were written before John's gospel, and thus all the books of the Bible were concluded by the year 80 A. D.

And how were they written? The answer to this question is just as important as the other already so briefly considered. It must be apparent to all that the human writers must be acknowledged as factors in the production of the Bible. Various were the ways in which they were used by the divine Spirit in preparing His revelation. Oral tradition, compilation from historic records were means used as well as revelation. The use of such means does not in any sense impair the inspiration of Scripture. "All scripture is given by inspiration," *i. e.* given as true—though it may be from uninspired sources. "Given by inspiration," sure-

ly cannot mean that God is the source and author of all contained in the Bible. Such an interpretation of inspiration would seem to make God responsible for the lies Satan told Job, and for a great many other ungodly sayings contained in the book. It is as injurious as it is needless to confound inspiration and revelation. Inspiration may only suggest, recall, and guide in securing and imparting knowledge already possessed. But it must mean that the writer was supernaturally assisted in making the record accurate. Revelation, however, is the divine Spirit uncovering the unknown to the writer so that it is seen. The traditions of men, the records of history, and revelations from God —all given by inspiration—were the ways in which the world received our Bible.

The compilers of these records, or scribes—as they were called—kept and multiplied them with the greatest care and toil. Writing upon stones or skins, or parchments and by the pen are the two forms of chirography known to have been in use, for some centuries before the earliest books of the Bible were written. The ten commandments were written on stone, and with the other sacred writings were copied upon fine skins of leather sewed together in strips, or upon a substance resembling modern paper manufactured from the reeds which grew on the banks of the river Nile. These strips of vellum or papyrus were about four inches in breadth, and only a few inches in length; they were joined together laterally, and made as long as the writing might require. Thus the roll of which we read so much was formed. The text upon the roll was usually written in

columns corresponding to the original pieces of the vellum. Each piece was read in its order, and rolled, when read, upon a stick held in the left hand, while the new columns would appear in the right. This is the form of the sacred books as possessed by the Jews and early Christians, from which were read the law and the prophets, the gospels, and all the New Testament writings. The original characters in which the Old Testament was written were the old Hebrew excepting the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Esther, and Ezra which were partly written in Chaldaic and Aramaic. The writing was a continuous formation of letters without vowels, or periods, to indicate either the sounds of the words, or the sense of the passage. Though while the Hebrew was a living language this occasioned little inconvenience, in view of these linguistic peculiarities it is a wonder the verbal errors of copyists which assuredly exist in the present manuscripts are so few and unimportant. And under divine guidance much is due to the efforts of Ezra, Nehemiah and Massorah for the vocalization, pronunciation, division and purity of the text, and the development of the language as we now possess it in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The New Testament text was given in similar forms but by the time it was written the facilities for writing and copying had greatly improved upon those in the days of the Old Testament writers. The New Testament was written originally in Greek without punctuation, or arrangement of the chapters or verses, and the earliest manuscripts reveal two kinds of writing called "uncial" and "cursive." The uncial is of a large round

letter resembling modern capitals, while the cursive is smaller and resembles our present day writing called round hand. So numerous were the copyists that before the close of the first century there was at least one copy of the gospels, and of the epistles, with letters from other early Christian fathers, possessed by all the Christian churches. From these original sources, and by these ways, and in those times, did mankind receive this priceless heritage from heaven. By the diligent hands of the transcriber, through the untiring devotion of those faithful servants of God, and the unerring guidance of the Omniscient Spirit we, at the cost of untold treasures and blood, have thus received this unspeakable gift of the eternal God, to guide our sin-benighted minds by its illumining precepts and save our immortal souls.

CHAPTER II.

BY WHOM WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN?

"No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." Peter.

Adam Clarke once said, "A good man could not have written the Bible if he would, and a bad man would not have written it if he could." We believe the logical answer to the above question is contained in this epigrammatic statement. For good men to have written it, and accredited their writings to others than those who wrote would have been to practice deception which in such a momentous matter good men would find impossible to do. For, though we allow that a low moral tone, and confused conceptions of a lofty motive governed those writers, they were at least sufficiently human to understand that one of the certainties of life is the discovery of hypocrisy. The sixty-six books of the Bible were written by about thirty different writers whose identity may be known by the ordinary rules which govern the discovery of authors with whom the age is not personally acquainted. I have a young friend who, as an engineer, sails the southern seas. When he writes to me I know from where and from whom the letter comes by the government stamp upon it, by the style of his writing, and the contents of his letters. And these writers of Scripture have been identified and made known to

reasonable religious people with a satisfactory measure of exactness by similar marks. These marks or evidence have often been ridiculed as inadequate to show the authorship of the Bible. But I have no desire to introduce here any that would not be accepted as valid in the highest courts of the land. Jurists tell us that "Documents found in a place in which, and under the care of persons with whom, such papers might naturally and reasonably be expected to be found, or in the possession of persons having an interest in them, are precisely the custody which gives authenticity to documents found within it." This statement is founded on the undying principles of equity and justice, and is the basal principle of law practice throughout the civilized world. This evidence is as admissible in proving the authorship as the truthfulness of the Scriptures. It will be possible for us to look into only a few of the most important books of the Bible and endeavor to discover who wrote them by adducing legitimate evidence on their behalf. Those less disputed ones which may not be considered, we shall take for granted according to the rule by which the greater proves the less.

The authors were all human, and each in writing retained his individuality, though all their writings were given under inspiration of God. Let us begin with the oldest book, viz., the book of Job. That Job wrote this book seems apparent from the fact that only such a man could write it. Keeping in mind the universally acknowledged fact that each inspired writer exercised fully his faculties in declaring his message, the reader should be easily convinced that only a Job who lived in the age of

Job, who knew what Job knew, and suffered as he suffered, could have written that matchless poem of human experience and divine providence. There are many good reasons why neither Moses nor Solomon could have written it. They lived in another place and period of the world's history than the author. The writer of it lived in the times of the eastern patriarchs, and in the days of the so called giants, and of the philosophic discussions of the sons of the east. The mode of life and thought revealed in the book is distinctively Arabian, just as the style of speech and thought in the "Canterbury Tales" is Chaucerian. In the book there are mentioned the worship of the sun, moon, and stars; but there is no word about the worship of idols. Riches are set forth or estimated in value by cattle. The kind of coin prevalent in that age is distinctly named. No sacrifices such as are named in the Pentateuch are spoken about. No reference whatever is made to the Mosaic law, and none to the exodus. It contains not a solitary allusion to a Jew, or a Hebrew; to the Holy Land, to Jerusalem, to the tabernacle, or to the temple; all of which would indicate that the book was written previous to the age of Moses. It is also of the highest probability that some of those named in the book lived in the days immediately following Abraham. In Genesis 36: 4–10, mention is made of Eliphaz as a son of Esau, and it is well known that Esau and his descendants lived in Mount Seir in the east. Another comforter is named Bildad, the Shuhite, which appellation doubtless connects him with Shuah, one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah, and all these sons occupied the

country towards the Persian gulf. Elihu, the Buzite, was also another comforter, and was probably a descendant of Nahor, who was the founder of the Buzites, and a relative of Abraham. The land owned by Buz is spoken of as "the land of Uz," which was the land where Job dwelt. In Smith's Bible Dictionary we are informed that Job had previously borne the name of Jobab, but like the names of Abraham, Jacob, and Joshua, it was changed, and that he was identical with Jobab, the prince of Edom. Therefore the preponderance of evidence shows that the book belongs to the times of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Elihu, who were descendants of Abraham, and contemporaries of Job; and that Job was its author.

The next to be noticed is the authorship of the first five books of the Bible called the Pentateuch. Generally speaking, the authorship of these books is ascribed to Moses, excepting, of course, the account of his own death, and a few minor matters attributed to Joshua. The popular reason given is "they were called the books of Moses"; but that is not by any means the principal or only one. There was no one either before or after the exile of Israel so well qualified as Moses to write them. It has never been disputed that "he was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians," and some of these books give evidence of such learning, which is now known to have been considerable. As the deliverer of the Israelitish people he was acquainted with their needs, their rights, and their history. He lived in a great crisis of the history of his own people; he had been the prime mover in many of their noble

deeds, and he, as their leader, would at least be acquainted with whatever historic documents existed. Thus he was exceptionally well qualified by his position to describe accurately the Arab life of his own ancestors, the exact condition of Egyptian civilization, the deliverance of Israel from bondage, the subsequent trials and teachings in their wilderness life. He was their hero; he had led them to freedom, and was pointing them to Canaan to win their promised rights by the sword. He had to justify their mission as a people fulfilling an high destiny, and through whom he proclaimed to the proud nations, "all the families of the earth should be blessed."

Never did man hear a louder call; seldom has a man had such qualifications to write the history of the origin and development of a nation. It is passing strange to read denials of the Mosaic authorship of these books made for the alleged purpose of removing the miraculous from the Bible, and in consequence making it more acceptable to unbelievers, and perplexed hosts. For, it is beyond question, that by placing the authorship of the first five books of the Bible after the exile, the miraculous element in their production is greatly increased. For instance, if Moses made a record of many of these events recorded in the Pentateuch as they occurred, and the accuracy of the record was assured by divine superintendence, there is less of the miraculous required for him to make the record, than there would be to reveal the facts to another writer one thousand years after the events, the time when the objectors to the Mosaic authorship claim they were written. History shows

the Israelites one thousand years after Moses were entirely separated from Egypt. Their associations were then Babylonian, Syrian, and Persian. It would, therefore, be as reasonable to expect Tolstoi, the Russian, to write without documents or tradition or divine revelation an accurate history of Tammany Hall, or of the American constitution, as for a writer in that age to write these books. It is readily granted they contain some Babylonian and Assyrian elements, the causes of which shall be stated in future chapters. But on the whole—as already mentioned—the books of Moses are Egyptian books colored with the desert life of the Israelites, revealing the needs and claims; and the relation of these people to one another, and to God; and their great destiny among the nations of the earth, and only a Moses could have written them. Indeed, the theories of our hypercritical friends seem infinitely more bottomless than those of the most orthodox. The internal evidence of the books when further examined supports even more strongly the Mosaic authorship. Exodus 17:14 says, "The Lord said unto Moses write this for a memorial in the book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua." In the same book, 34 ch., 27–28 vv., we read, "And the Lord said unto Moses write thou these words for after the tenor of these words have I made a covenant with thee, and with Israel." In Numbers 33:2 He said, "And Moses wrote their goings out, according to their journeyings." In Deut. 31:9, 22–24 we read, "Moses wrote this law: Moses, therefore, wrote this song the same day." And in addition to this evidence we have nearly every writer in the Bible testifying that

Moses wrote these books, and the words of the spotless Jesus verify them all. Surely the testimony of Christ ought to be sufficient proof of their Mosaic authorship to any but a thorough going rationalist, for His spotless character is the seal of His truth.

We come now to the consideration of the authors of the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Samuel. That Joshua wrote the book bearing his name has seldom been seriously disputed. It has generally been classified with the five books ascribed to Moses as a part of the early history of the Israelites in Canaan, and its authorship stands or falls with them. For, if the Pentateuch was not written till after the exile, it is impossible to believe that the book of Joshua with its subsequent history could have been written before it. However, it may be premature to enter upon an elaborate defense of Joshua until Moses has been disposed of. And judging from the recent utterances of one of the opponents to the Mosaic authorship, Joshua is likely to prove as formidable a support to that authorship as he was to the Mosaic wars.

The book of Judges takes up the history of the Israelitish people from the death of Joshua to the death of Samuel and was written by the latter, of which the contents of the first part of the book are almost indisputable proof. That it contains the statement, "there was then no king in the land" is no proof that the writer lived at a later date than Samuel. It may only serve to show the fact that no king had as yet been given to Israel. The book of Ruth which has been fitly termed a "beautiful epic poem of domestic life," was formerly

an appendix of the book of Judges, and was composed by the same author. This is borne witness to by Josephus, Origen, and Jerome; and the weight of evidence to-day is overwhelmingly in favor of Samuel. The book or books of Samuel are called so, more because the writer treats of him and his times, than because he wrote them. Their authorship is generally believed to be uncertain, and there is abundant evidence in the book itself to show that it was not written until after the kingdom was divided in Rehoboam's time. The most ancient tradition of its authorship is, that the first twenty-four chapters were written by Samuel, and, at a later date, perhaps some prophet—Nathan or Gad—edited the remaining portion. Many modern scholars adopt this view, and the Scriptures themselves which, as evidence, ought to be of still greater value, support it in 1st Chron. 29: 29 by saying, "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer." But of this book with some others in the Bible we can only say in the words of the saintly Fuller, "He that has a piece of gold of right weight, and stamped with the king's image, cares not to know who minted it." The Kings, Lamentations, and Jeremiah were written by that prophet. The books of Kings which, like those of Samuel were originally one, and for a time were united with the books of the Chronicles, are records of the kings of Judah and Israel compiled and completed by the prophet down to the captivity, or to the last of the Jewish royal rulers. The Lamentations and Jeremiah con-

tain brief accounts of the sufferings of the nation, the warnings of God to it in its decay, and His earnest invitations to repentance. Josephus and the writers of the Talmud support the Jeremianic authorship of the Lamentations, and Drs. Hornblower and Keil and the modern critical school favor it. Ewald says of it, "every competent judge will ascribe them to only one poet," and Thenius is certain that chapters II and IV "are undeniably from Jeremiah." The objections urged against it are, the absence in some portions of the precarious evidence of Jeremiah's words and style, and his so-called unnatural pastime of busying himself with the poetic art in such calamitous days. But the criticisms are not well founded; for the book shows his own style to be very marked, in most chapters; while, if he had a chance to reply to the charge of "unnatural indifference" he might say with the late President Lincoln when charged with levity during the Civil War that, "but for such a source of relief, grief would have killed me." Concerning the book of Jeremiah we only quote the beautiful and accurate words of Wordsworth that "his prophecies are his autobiography," which fact is an indisputable proof of his authorship.

The Proverbs were written by Solomon with the exception of the two last chapters of the book, as also the book of Ecclesiastes, or "the Preacher" written after his weary soul had struggled through selfishness, sensuality, and perplexity into a calm, pure peace; and probably also the Song of Solomon. This last as shown in the book of Kings[1] is closely related to the Proverbs, which

[1] 1 Kings 4:32; Cant. 1:1.

are universally conceded to the wise king, and links inseparably the authorship of both. The book of Psalms which contains the sweetest of the Hebrew nation's poetry, the spiritual songs of the Jewish Church, and a reflection of the religious and irreligious experience of the writers, has several authors. Of these psalms, after the most searching criticism, alike by friend and foe, the consensus of opinion shows seventy-nine written by David, one by Moses, one by Solomon, twelve by Asaph, one by Heman, and one by Ethan. The remaining fifty-one are anonymous; eleven of them were written for the sons of Korah; fifteen are called pilgrim songs; eleven, hallelujah psalms beginning with the words "praise the Lord," and the 136th Psalm in which the mercy of the Lord is sung twenty-six times.

The authors of the minor, or lesser books of the prophets we must pass by with the statement that excepting Daniel they are almost universally believed to have been the writers of the several books whose names they bear. Their messages and style are variously adapted to the nature of their various missions, are fully in harmony with their personality, with the times in which they lived, and of which they wrote.

It is, however, very different with the books of Isaiah and Daniel, as the authorship of these has been most fiercely disputed. The story of Jonah has been laughed at by scoffing unbelievers, but Christian (?) rationalists have discredited the authorship of Isaiah and Daniel largely because they disbelieve their prophecies. For example, these objectors admit Isaiah wrote twenty-six chapters of the book bearing his name, but when they

come to the prophecy concerning Cyrus and his kingdom, they, rather than believe in the prophecy say, "He is not the author of the remaining chapters." "A second Isaiah" say they, "some unknown writer in the time of Cyrus wrote these." If this were true, is it not passing strange that a writer equal to Isaiah their prophet, almost the peer of David in sacred song, a leader of the Jewish people with the clearest Messianic message on his lips, should have been "unknown" to Israel? Think of a Gladstone being forgotten one hundred and fifty years hence by the British; of the name of Lincoln never being found in an archive of the United States, and then believe this counsellor of Jewish kings, unsurpassed of Jewish statesmen; this messenger of the Messianic kingdom upon which "Israel's hope" rested, and who wrote this latter part of the book of Isaiah was, "unknown"! The entire book was attributed to Isaiah the son of Amoz, by the great Synagogue composed of such illustrious men as Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah, and Haggai. For centuries after the captivity, the book was used every Sabbath-day as "the book of Isaiah" and thirteen out of its sixteen prophetic readings were selected from the part of the book objected to by those critics. The author of the first part of it wrote in the reign of Hezekiah, and the author of the second part also speaks of the wife of Hezekiah as a type of the church of God restored. John the Baptist was the strongest link in the chain which bound the Jewish church to the New Testament age prior to the birth of Christ. In telling us through whom he received his commission as herald of the matchless Monarch Christ,

he quotes from the 40th chapter of Isaiah, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet." Our Lord when on earth received into His holy hands that same roll from which John the Baptist unwittingly testified to the single Isaiah authorship, and He also read the words as those of Isaiah. As the writers of the most recent life of Lincoln have shown that by his style, manner, and matter those letters are Lincoln's, and not Seward's or Blaine's, so Prof. Delitzsch, one of the foremost of Hebrew scholars and students of eastern literature shows that the sententious style and sharp movement of thought, everywhere discernible in the beginning of Isaiah's book, are but the prelude to the majestic harmonies in the latter half of it. So that if he wrote the first part—which has not been disputed—it is evident he wrote the whole.

Our Lord and some of His apostles have repeatedly borne witness to Daniel as the author of the book which bears his name, and all Jewish tradition ascribes it to that heroic prophet. The strongest objection to this view is founded upon the fact that the book is written in both the Hebrew and Chaldaic languages. From this, the objectors conclude that there were at least two authors of it. However, if it be remembered that Daniel was a Hebrew who knew both languages; that it would be natural for him to relate the early history of himself and his companions in Hebrew, and write the visions pertaining to the Babylonian empire in the prevailing language of that nation, the objection fades like a star before the sunlight. Moreover, the dual character

of the language used, proves it must have been written by a Jew in Babylonian captivity. The exact acquaintance of the historic relations, the court manners and national customs of Daniel's time revealed in the book testify that the author was also a person in high position and distinction in Babylon. It has been also objected that there are historic inaccuracies in the book —though, so far, the statement is supported by more assumption than fact—which could not have been made by a resident author. But the cuneiform tablet recently discovered by Mr. Pinches in Nineveh shows Belshazzar to have been both a prince and a man of action throughout the nation, and that Daniel was at least so far correct in his history.

With the remark that Ezra and Nehemiah wrote the histories ascribed to them after the return of the Israelites from the captivity in Babylon, we shall briefly notice the writers of the New Testament Scriptures.

Only the authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews, and the second one ascribed to Peter and the gospel by John, have been earnestly disputed. It is uncertain who wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, but the weight of evidence supports the general belief that Peter wrote the second epistle ascribed to him. The accepted authorship of John's gospel has been fiercely assailed; but we must either accept of John as its author, or that the gospel is an intentional fraud. The author repeatedly declares himself to have been an eye-witness of the life of Christ (John 1: 14; 19: 35; 1 John 1: 1). It was generally received as John's gospel fifty years after his death. Marcion, Valentinus, Bas-

ilides and other critical writers of the first and second centuries acknowledge its genuineness. Such evidence cannot be explained if John was not its author.

Of course, the trustworthiness or authenticity of others has been questioned, but not their authorship. Paul wrote thirteen of the twenty-seven New Testament books. Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles and the gospel bearing his name, and the others were either written or dictated by those to whom they are ascribed. It has often been asserted there were no Christian writings in the first century, and that it was one of dark superstition of which there is nothing certain or reliable. But the histories of the first four centuries of the Christian era reveal the opposite. Indeed, the pagan and patristic literature, the writings alike of apologists and unbelievers of that time illustrate most fully the amazing audacity and groundless assumptions of modern infidelity on this important question. These New Testament authors were our Lord's biographers and first writers to His infant church. They were as well known to the churches as Moody is in the Christian world today, and a copy of their writings was in nearly every Christian congregation. The indisputable evidence of this is in the following historic and well known facts. Polycarp was a pupil of St. John; and Justin Martyr a disciple of Polycarp, was born ten years before John died. Clement and Barnabas of the beginning of the second century mention in their letters the epistles of Paul. Tertullian also of the second century occupies in his works thirty folio pages by quotations from the autograph writings of these apostles and evangelists.

In the third century Origen, Victorinus, and Dionysius wrote expositions of these writings, and quoted long extracts from the apostles. In the fourth century there existed eleven distinct catalogues of these books with the names of the writers appended. In several church councils of which the last was held at Carthage in 397, there was set forth a list containing all the New Testament books with their authors. These are only a few of many writings which show the first four Christian centuries teemed with testimony most credible to the writers of the New Testament.

Moreover, as another has remarked, "these books could not have been written in the same language in which we have them if they had not been written before the end of the first century," and therefore by our authors. When Jerusalem was destroyed in the 70th year of our Lord, the Jews were rooted out of the land almost stock and branch. Foreigners came to it from all directions, and the former language of the people became a dead language. It became a conglomerate, and in the first quarter of the 2nd century there were few if any who could either speak or write the language of the apostles. Indeed any attempt to do so would have failed as entirely as that of Josh Billings to reform the English language by phonetic spelling. Infidel writers of the first four centuries also wrote favoring our authors. The Emperor Julian, known as "the apostate" wrote in 361 a work against Christianity; but he nowhere expressed a doubt as to either the books of Christians or their authors. It is almost certain that had occasion admitted of it, he would have challenged

the genuineness of the books. Porphyry, universally conceded to have been the most formidable opponent to Christianity wrote in 270, and spoke of Matthew as "their evangelist." Celsus, esteemed by modern infidels as a wonderful philosopher, wrote against Christianity in 176 a book entitled "A True Discourse" of which Origen has preserved fragments. But so unlike was he to his modern infidel brethern that he admitted the existence of the Christian or New Testament writings, and their genuineness. Is it unfair to ask, "Was it because he knew more than his present day successors in unbelief, or was he only more honest than they?" Whatever the reason it must be apparent to every unprejudiced mind that earnest seekers after truth, who ignore such testimony accessible to the average scholar, are inexcusably guilty of trifling with indisputable evidence which would be convincing in any civil court. Such testimony has been provided in abundance alike by the friends and foes of the lowly Nazarene,—our Lord in glory,—and it proves that these "Holy men of old," to whom their writings were assigned, "spake and wrote them from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost."

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS AS HISTORY.

"They all shall wax old as doth a garment." David.

The question is often asked, "Have we proof that the Bible, or the several books of it, were written in the ages, or within a reasonable time of the historic epochs of which they profess to speak?" And the answers generally given by our average church members are seldom very assuring; and those of scepticism may be summed up in the ever emphatic, though presumptuous "No." Upon this book, part of which Moses wrote, Isaiah dictated, David sang, and John penned, believing people have in faith wisely pillowed their heads, soothed their hearts, and anchored their immortal hopes. And it is surely of the utmost importance that we have evidence of an independent character, that its historic portions contain real history. In treating of these books or portions of them, I shall in this chapter discuss them merely as matters of history, and apart from any question of their inspiration. Let us receive them according to the strength of the evidence produced, as we would any other history. The evidence called forth shall be the living neighbors and enemies of those Hebrews whose history the books relate. These are impartial witnesses, for they had fought with many of them for their native land, their hearthstones,

and life-blood. All courts of enlightened lands agree that favorable testimony from an enemy is the strongest possible, even when given upon cross-examination. But when it is written spontaneously, without any intention of rendering assistance, as a record of facts which transpired, such testimony is unassailable and invaluable.

One great difficulty in the way of many people who reject the miraculous, and who do not believe the Bible as historically true, is, they expect miraculous evidence to support it. They say, "Show us the original manuscripts with the autographs of the inspired writers," whereas, nothing less than a miracle could preserve these throughout such long ages. The demand is not only extravagant but irrational, and serves to illustrate how differently the Bible is treated from any other book. Whoever heard of a request for the original manuscripts of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, of Shakespeare's works, or of Chaucer's Tales, in order to believe them true? Reasonable people are satisfied with rational evidence to prove the authenticity and genuineness of these books which were also printed from manuscripts. We know these books to be true by the succeeding generations having received them from the time they were published; by the writings themselves revealing the characteristics of the writers, and of the age in which they wrote; and by histories written during the same periods witnessing to their historic truth. Such evidence has always been considered sufficent to establish the historic character of secular writings, and why is it considered insufficient on behalf

of the historic books of the Bible? In such an instance so-called reasoning (?) unbelief becomes as tyrannical and bigoted as credulous superstition.

The evidence to which I shall confine myself here is that drawn from writings either earlier than, or contemporaneous with, the Old Testament manuscripts. Giants of faith have said, "God has never left His people without a witness," and I think the truthful comment has been made, "nor without the proper one for each trial." Never has this truth been more fully demonstrated than during the past ten years. The Bible was assailed from every side. Even its friends had begun to dissect it, and deny or approve its worth as a sampler would prove cheese—according to his taste. Evidence adduced, and ordinarily accepted as sufficient, was rejected as inadequate on behalf of the Bible; timid people feared for it, and good men became anxious as its opponents grew bold. The great objection which seemed to demolish all argument and evidence was summed up in the sentence, "There were no writings in those days of antiquity; the Bible must have been handed down by oral tradition, and very little of it can be historical." That was their Gibraltar from which they threw the death-threatening missiles. But it proved only a sweeping conclusion from a narrow and false premise. For it has been proven beyond any question that there was writing in those days of antiquity. Suddenly as a star falls out of the sky at midnight, there was discovered a stone by an Arab sheikh who, we are told by Prof. Sayce, gave information concerning it to a Mr. Klein, who was then traveling to Moab. On examining

it the sheikh had little knowledge of the value of the stone, as it was only "four feet high, and two in width." But when it fell into the hands of the archæologist it was found to contain thirty-four lines of an inscription in the letters of the Phœnician alphabet. This stone proved the first of many effective weapons which have, under God, driven those enemies of His Word from their position, by demonstrating there were writings before the age of the Old Testament manuscripts. When Mr. Klein returned to Jerusalem, he informed the Prussian consulate of the discovery, and measures were at once taken to secure possession of the stone, as large sums of money were demanded for its purchase. On being deciphered by archæologists, it proved to be a stone erected by Mesha, the king of Moab, in the 9th century, B. C., and contained a record of his successful revolt against Israel, and written in honor of his god Chemosh, to whom his successes are ascribed. This discovery proved conclusively that the ancient East had formerly attained to a greater civilization than even this stone revealed, and great diligence was manifested in digging out the supposed secrets of the buried cities of the past. Excavators digged and discovered until in some instances their devotion cost them their lives. Scholars learned in oriental languages, and hieroglyphics, studied more deeply the languages of these eastern nations with an assiduity never before equalled, that they might read accurately the buried literature of the dead past. Nor did they go unrewarded. Monuments were discovered, and also great libraries written upon imperishable clay tablets; and these have taught

wonderful lessons concerning the history of these ancient lands, and afford indisputable proofs of the historic character of the Old Testament manuscripts.

Drs. Schleimann, Petrie, Layard, Botta, Sayce, and others, all archæologists and oriental scholars of the highest repute, have spent long years in searching amid the buried cities of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Persia, and in deciphering what has been found. Their discoveries have also proven that writing was in existence long before the exodus, and that it is no longer necessary for believers in the Bible to rely solely upon internal evidence to prove its authenticity. As another has said, "the verbal hair splitting of the higher critic need not be depended upon, any more than the dogmatic statement of the lower critic, to prove the historic character of the Old Testament manuscripts." We have these stones written at least as early as the books of the Old Testament claim to have been written, and we may call them to witness. Indeed, Prof. Sayce, and others equally well qualified to judge, assert that the testimony of these tablets shows that of all the ancient writings to which they incidentally witness, the history of the Old Testament Scriptures is the most accurate. We are told, tablets have been discovered in Nineveh containing epic poems of primitive Chaldea, in the reign of Khammuraba 2350 B. C.; the poems being like unto Tennyson's Alfred, and revealing how ancient the art of writing is. In Tel-el-Arma where stood centuries ago Thebes, the ancient southern capital of Egypt, of whose pyramids Napoleon said to his fainting heroes, "Forty centuries look down upon you," tablets were discov-

ered by Mr. Naville, containing writings which reveal the history of Egyptian religion, and verify the existence of the Old Testament Scriptures from the time of the pyramid builders down to the age of the conquest of Egypt by Persia. Moreover, the writings on these tablets, according to the archæologists, are "in the cuneiform characters of Babylon," and, therefore, show clearly that at least a century before the exodus the Babylonian language prevailed throughout the East. They also reveal that a considerable portion of the letters found in the mound at Tel-el-Arma were sent from Palestine and Phœnicia; and that the land of Canaan was a center of the correspondence which took place between the Egyptian court and the surrounding provinces. Some were found dated from Lachish, from Jerusalem, from Gaza, and from Shechem; and serve to show whence came the Babylonian and Chaldaic phraseology in the five books of Moses, and to prove the prevalence of the art of writing among these ancient people. Prof. Sayce has also told the story of how these tablets contain writings of the creation of the world, revealing a wondrous correspondence between the order of the days in the book of Genesis, and that of the cuneiform tablets of clay. Each tablet contains an account of one day's creation, until the whole story in poetic and philosophic form is completed.

In the story reference is made to the institution of the Sabbath, the belief that woman was created out of man, the garden of Eden, and the name of Methusaleh is distinctly mentioned as "the man of God." It is true that some archæologists have pointed out the dif-

ferences existing in some particulars between the writings on these slabs, and those in Genesis. But the differences are more in the forms of the conceptions of the writers, than in the facts related. Indeed, even the archæologists referred to, show the difference is principally in the fact that the Babylonian writer deifies the forces of nature, while the Hebrew writer sees only the creative will of the Supreme God. It seems to us this would merely prove that those tablets written 3500 B. C., and the contents of the book of Genesis were not copied the one from the other; and that the latter are not myths, manufactured by a credulous and ignorant people of a comparatively recent age. They are the conceptions of historic events, recorded by a writer at least as old as the Scriptures themselves profess to be.

It is well known that until very recently the geology of the East, where the events recorded in Genesis occurred, was considered sufficient evidence to prove the flood was historical. As a proof of this, even Huxley's reputation as a geologist was greatly impaired by his opposition to the views on this question of such specialists in geology as Sir William Dawson, Prof. Dana, Sir Roderick Murchison and others. That evidence has, however, been fortified by the discovery of a version of the flood in cuneiform characters, which has now become a common-place in modern books, written on the history of the Old Testament. This writing on the slabs shows there was not the remotest necessity for handing down the story by tradition, as the writers of the original manuscripts were almost certain eye-witnesses to the great deluge. Indeed, these archæologists inform us

that upon this slab, which is as old as Noah himself, there are found the very words used in Scripture which say, "the Lord smelt a sweet savour," when Noah offered his sacrifice. Prof. Sayce further informs us that even the tenth chapter of Genesis is not a mere historic record of early races as commentators have taught, but only a record of the northern and southern zones of the then known world. And in like manner, as the Bible teaches, these stones declare, their inhabitants were called children of Canaan, in the same sense as all residents on American soil are called Americans.

Again, the name of Abraham has been found in early Babylonian contracts. And the campaign of Chedor-laomer and his allies as recorded in the 14th chapter of Genesis has been proved historical by this class of writings. These stones make known that he led the conquest in the west with Abraham, and after his enemies were subdued they served him as vassals, or provincial kings for twelve years. Thus the Scriptural account of these historic details concerning the wars of these kings, and the geography of these kingdoms may be accepted as history with greatest confidence. Even the historic character of the much despised Melchisedek, has been vindicated by one of these tablets found in the mound of Tel-el-Arma. It reads, as does the Scripture in Genesis, that "he was king of Jerusalem, because he was the high priest of its God." Also, the historic character of Joseph has been established beyond any doubt by these tablets, and the book of Genesis is thus shown to rank with the monuments of the past, as a historic record of events which happened.

In like manner as the clay records of Babylon prove these ancient Scriptures to be a history, and not a myth or mere tradition, so do Egyptian tablets prove the exodus to have been all the Hebrew Scriptures claim. Dr. Brugsch has discovered tablets which show the city of Rameses was the name given to Zoan, or Tunis, after its reconstruction by Rameses II. The city of Pithom of Scripture was discovered only three years ago in the mounds of Tel-el-Maskhuta. This is near the famous site of the modern Tel-el-Kebir, and inscriptions found on the spot prove that it was built by that Pharaoh (Rameses II.) for a storehouse of corn or treasure. The store-chambers have been laid bare, and are divided by partitions from eight to ten inches thick. They were constructed of brick baked in the sun, some of which were mixed with straw, andothers without it. And as Mr. Naville has said, "We may see in these strawless brick the work of the oppressed Israelites when the order came, 'Thus saith the Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.'"

During the reign of the successor of this Pharaoh the exodus took place. The recently discovered official reports of it state, "They passed through Khetam," which is called Etham in Scripture—to the lakes of the city of Pithom which is along part of the road these Israelites travelled on the way out of Egypt," as recorded in Scripture. So these Egyptian writings unite with the early Babylonian ones, and together they become incontrovertible historic witnesses of the historic character of these ancient manuscripts.

From Assyrian mounds, and ruins also, illustrations

and confirmations of the historic character of the Holy Book have been brought forth abundantly. Specially corroborative of Scripture truth have been the sculptured stone, and clay books of Nineveh, the ancient Assyrian capital. It is now well known that as the power of Egypt declined, that of Assyria increased in the East, and it was with Assyria the later history of Israel had to do. The records left, which have been recently discovered, confirm many of the historical statements of the Old Testament. Ahab of Israel is the first king mentioned in these discovered Assyrian texts. In 1st Kings 20: 34 we learn that, "Ahab and Benhadad made a contract as allies against Assyria." The tablets from Nineveh relate that "Ahab brought 2,000 chariots and 10,000 men to help Benhadad and his allies in a great battle against the Assyrians." Further, both the Bible and the monuments testify that Hazael was Benhadad's successor. Tiglath-Pileser is the first Assyrian monarch mentioned in Old Testament history, and it has been recently learned from the monuments that he was the first who led his armies against Israel. In 2d Kings 15: 29 we read, "In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria." Tiglath-Pileser also tells of this conquest in an inscription written in his eleventh year as ruler, which was 734 B. C. The interpreters of the tablets tell us it reads, "After overunning some of the Phœnician states, I captured the towns of Gilead, and Abel-beth-maachah, . . . and annexed the whole

district to Assyria." He then relates his conquest of Gaza, and adds, "Peka their king I put to death, and I raised Hosea to the sovereignty over them." These inscriptions reveal that Tiglath-Pileser died in December 727 B. C. and the crown was usurped by Elulæos who took the name of Shalmaneser IV. He carried Hosea into captivity, and laid siege to Samaria as we are told in the Bible. One Sargon seized the throne after Shalmaneser's death, and immediately after Samaria was entirely conquered. His name is but once mentioned in Scriptures, and the wise highest critics of the Bible had declared it was a fictitious name in a mythical story. However, the cuneiform writings belonging to his reign, or as one has called them, "his state papers" do not only confirm his identity, and the truth of Scripture, but record "He was the greatest of Assyrian monarchs, and that he ruled 17 years." It has often been said of late, that "the Hittites" to whom reference is made in the books of Kings, "were not known to classical writers, and that allusion to them in Scripture destroyed the credibility of the historic books of the Bible." But the credibility of the Scriptures is not so easily injured as that of their critics. The living stones from Egypt and Assyria both prove that the Hittites inhabited the district assigned to them in the Bible, and that they were once a very powerful people. These tablets witness that in the palmy days of Egypt during the reign of the oppressor of Israel, they contended on equal terms with the Egyptians themselves and the Egytian king was glad ultimately, "to secure a peace by marrying a Hittite princess." In our age, there is a wide spread belief

that marriage leads to war, as certainly as the needle to the pole. But those Hittites wisely interpreted it as a seal of peace.

These archæologists further tell us those Hittites in the age of the exodus had carried arms across Asia Minor, as far as the shores of the Egean, and the empire they founded there left remains on the sculptured rocks of Lydia. They invented a peculiar system of pictorial writing to which the early art of Greece was greatly indebted. Even the site of their northern capital named Carchemish, was discovered at a place now called Jerablus on the Euphrates, by Mr. G. Smith the archæologist. Others reveal the Egyptian name of Joseph the Hebrew in Egypt; have verified the accuracy of some disputed statements contained in the Bible concerning the geography of some parts of Palestine; and show how even some of the early patriarchs and kings David, and Solomon were associated with those Hittites of Scripture.

In the past the Bible has been too often approached as if it were a fairy tale, but these impartial writers with the stylus on those stones have demonstrated that it contains historic facts. They reveal that the Jews for centuries before their exile to Babylon were a literary people, and well acquainted with the art of writing; that their historical books are neither false nor mythical; that there is nothing in historic literature more probable than they were written at the early period claimed. And both the believing and doubting world owe a debt of gratitude to these pioneer archæologists who, under an over-ruling Providence, have

unearthed and interpreted these imperishable writings which so indisputably assist in proving the age, the credibility, and the authenticity of much of the history contained in the Old Testament. Indeed, it seems more like a dream than a reality, that these human voices in stone, and Scripture should so harmonize in declaring to mankind messages from the past, of wonder, of mercy, and of miracles. Surely they cannot but woo sinful man from himself to lean hard by faith upon the "Imperishable Rock"—the Word of the eternal God.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS AS PROPHECY.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Paul.

Prophecy is God's eye scanning the history of the future. When we approach the discussion of it we enter the field of the miraculous and the divine. Therefore the truthfulness of prophecy can be attested only by its fulfillment. Whether the prophecies contained in the Bible are authentic, is, however, another question which may be considered without reference to their fulfillment. Though, unless both questions are dealt with, there can be little satisfaction derived from the consideration of either. Prophecy sometimes means a declaration or preaching, without any special reference to the futurity usually implied in the word itself. When St. Paul exhorted the Philippians to "despise not prophesyings," he meant, despise not preachings. The specific meaning of the word prophecy is a foretelling of future events miraculously revealed. The prophecy must not be merely a happy coincidence, the foretelling of which may be the result of an extensive knowledge of information not accessible to all; or of a brilliant genius; or whose fulfillment is the result of concurrent circumstances. Believers in the prophecies of the Bible as a part of divine revelation should be as willing that self-evident rules govern our prophecies as

our mathematics. Otherwise, the doubtful probabilities uttered by Delphic oracles might be classed as prophecies. The prediction should be definitely made known before the event. The event foretold should be invisible to human view, and incapable of a double meaning. True prophecy cannot descend to the uncertain puerilities of a juggler's riddle which may be capable of different applications and a variety of meanings. Many portions of the prophetic books are history, and were predicted by the prophets as incidents in the nation's future. It is of great moment that their historic character should be fully understood by the average Christian of this age. As we must limit this discussion to very meagre proportions, we shall make only a few selections from the greater prophets. In the days of Isaiah there were many shrewd politicians who saw that the policy of King Ahaz would ultimately prove disastrous to the independence of the Israelitish nation. But Isaiah alone described in his prophecy contained in the 10th chapter of his book, the manner in which, and by whom, the Jewish nation should be overthrown. Many Bible critics have, however, poked fun in a rather undignified manner at this prophetic utterance, and scouted the idea of the barest possibility of its being historic. But within the past few years the historic accuracy of this prophecy has been thoroughly vindicated by the Assyrian monuments.[1] According to archæologists these tell the history of the whole of the struggles between Assyria and Judah and Egypt. They state that ten

[1] "Records of the Past." New Series, 1.

years before the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, there was a previous one by his father, Sargon. A Chaldean chief named Merodach-Baladan had made himself king of Babylon on the death of Shalmaneser, and succeeded for some years in maintaining himself against the Assyrian king. Sargon, we are told, became more powerful, and the usurper made overtures to form a vast league against him. These monuments reveal that he sent messengers to Elam, Egypt, and Judah and other small states in the West, and Hezekiah's illness formed an excuse for their visit to him. We are told the writings upon the monuments reveal that the league was formed. But before its members had time to act in concert, Sargon learned of it, and at once marched his army upon Palestine. The wide spreading land of Judah was soon overrun by Sargon's army, and its capital taken, as recorded and prophesied in the 10th and 22nd chapters of Isaiah, by that prophet.[1] These same monuments also make known Sargon was murdered by his own soldiers, and succeeded on the throne by his son Sennacherib, who was crowned on the 12th of July, 705 B. C.

Hezekiah king of Judah, trusting to the king of Egypt, threw off his allegiance to Assyria, and was followed by other Phœnician states. However, four years afterwards Sennacherib felt strong enough to punish them, and then came the terrible campaign which ended so disastrously for the vain-glorious Assyrian, and which Isaiah relates. And the details of both narratives, the one in Isaiah, and the other by the cuneiform writers,

[1] Sayce's "The Higher Criticism," etc. Ch. 9.

as translated by the archæologists, corroborate each other, and reveal that Jerusalem was not captured at that time, and that Sennacherib never again ventured to invade Palestine. Indeed, we are told that so identical are the writings of Isaiah and those of the monuments on this part of history, that the sum of money named by Isaiah as given by Hezekiah, is the same in value as that set forth on the stone by Sennacherib. An inscription on a statue of Tirhakah, an Egyptian prince, now in the Bulak museum, reveals that soon afterwards Judah became a vassal to Assyria, and then the historic truth, and also the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning Egypt's overthrow by that power were established. A stone containing part of the annals of Nebuchadnezzar, giving an account of his conquest of Egypt, relates that Esarhaddon, the successor of Sennacherib, rebuilt Babylon which his father had destroyed, and took prisoner into Babylon Manasseh the king of Judah, and that in the 37th year of his age Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt, and defeated the Egyptians.

Readers of general history are aware that as the Assyrian empire fell, the Babylonian one arose. Jeremiah had all through the iniquitous days of Judah prophesied that Jerusalem would fall by the hand of a Babylonian, and not of an Assyrian conqueror. Appearances were so much against him that the worldly wise men of his age laughed at his simplicity, and the lack of his political foresight, as many still laugh at the teachings of Scripture. But he was divinely persistent in his course, and provided more food for the

scorner in his folly, when he foretold Zedekiah—the last of Jewish kings—that he should behold the king of Babylon face to face. Again Ezekiel's prediction that Zedekiah should not see Babylon, though he should die there, appeared to contradict that of Jeremiah, and the sceptical critics became gleeful over "these fables called prophecy." But these stones referred to, contain abundance of evidence, of an indisputable character, that Zedekiah was delivered over to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, in North Palestine. There his sons were put to death in his presence, his own eyes put out, and he taken in chains a captive to pine and die in Babylon. Thus the historic accuracy, as also the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, are proved beyond any peradventure.

And the prophecy of the overthrow of Babylon as related by Isaiah, has been literally recorded on these cuneiform writings, and signed by Cyrus the conqueror. Archæologists have discovered two long inscriptions of his in the ruins of Babylon, one of which gives in chronological order, the events which marked the reign of the father of Belshazzar, the last Babylonian king, as well as the history of the final conquest of that empire. The other is a proclamation put forth by Cyrus not long after the defeat and death of Nabonidus. It was thought that Herodotus had revealed the manner in which Cyrus had conquered Babylon. But these inscriptions show there was no siege of Babylon. The capital opened its gates to the general of Cyrus, and his soldiers entered the city "without fighting." Three months later Cyrus himself arrived, and the conquest

was completed as silently and effectively as the drying up of brooks and springs by an eastern sun. Soon afterwards he assembled the various peoples whom the Babylonian kings had carried into captivity, and restored them to their own lands and liberties.

Further, Prof. Sayce tells that the actual records of Nabonidus and Cyrus written by their instructions in the language and characters of Babylonia corroborate the historic accuracy of many of the prophecies in the books of Daniel, and the historic character of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is admitted by all. Indeed, many contend the latter are histories only—"mere prophecies after the event." It is as unnecessary, as it is perhaps still impossible, to prove the historic accuracy of every statement in the Old Testament by oriental discoveries of an imperishable nature. But it is beyond reasonable contention that these books which comprise that sacred record are impregnable as a history of events which happened, and have been written and handed down by credible men. And in the words of a great archæologist, "What has been achieved already is an earnest of what will be achieved hereafter, when the buried cities and tombs of the East have all been made to deliver up their dead."

The fulfillment of many of these prophecies is as indisputable as the accuracy of their history, and their fulfillment in the past should be accepted as an earnest of that of the remainder in the future. There are computed 333 plain prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the coming of Jesus Christ. Any one of these we are willing to have tested by the axioms already

stated, in order to establish them as prophecies containing the miraculous and the divine. The latest of these were written 400 years B. C., of which we shall mention only a few.

There should be an incomparable character sent into this world who shall be known as God's Messiah. Jesus of Nazareth was known as God's anointed. A herald shall prepare the way before Him. John the Baptist came and prepared the way for Christ by preaching repentance and the remission of sins.

It was prophesied He should be born at Bethlehem of Judea; and through a wonderful concurrence of events—though the home of His parents was Nazareth—He was born in Bethlehem.

His ministry was predicted to begin at Galilee, and it did so. He was to be known as "wonderful," and "He spake as never man spake." He was to preach good tidings unto men, and myriads have danced for joy as they have received His message. His character was to be inimitable; and who is there like unto God's anointed? He was to be despised and rejected of men; and He was so. He was to be sold for thirty pieces of silver, and the end of the traitor Judas bore testimony that He was, as also the records of Jewish history. He was to give sight to the blind; His gentleness was to be most gentle; His tenderness most tender; and His mercy most merciful. And the breath of His gentleness was a transformation; the glimpse of His love was life, and the touch of His mercy was redemption. His cheek should be turned to the smiter, and His back to the thongs; but in complaint He should not open His

mouth. He should be put to death; His hands and feet pierced, His side riven by a spear; but not a bone of His body should be broken. He shall suffer for the sins of the world. He was to die as a malefactor, and His grave was to be with the wicked. Without quoting farther may we not ask, are these prophecies not sufficiently clear? Were they not far, far away from the events? Yet they have all been fulfilled in the Savior Jesus Christ. And all the leading nations of this age, Christians and non-Christians, excepting a blasphemous few, declare Him the matchless character of the ages. Then, how should anyone dare deny the prophecies and their fulfillment, unless he is prepared to prove the contrary?

During His life He predicted events all of which literally came to pass. He foretold His doctrine should produce great distress and confusion in the world. It is the boast of unbelievers that it has done so. His disciples should meet with unfriendly treatment from mankind; and history is stained with the records of their martyrdom. The Jews should be rejected as a people for their unbelief; and the Gentiles or heathen world called to the Christian faith instead. Church history, and the conditions of the Jewish people prove the fulfillment of these statements. He said the chief priests and scribes should put Him to death, by delivering Him to the Gentiles who should mock, scourge, and crucify Him. Both profane and sacred history attest that this came to pass. That all the disciples should forsake Him at death, and He should be left without human aid to die for the sins of men; and it was so. That the fame of the woman who had anointed His feet with

ointment, should be as lasting and extensive as the Gospel; and it is so. That Jerusalem should be destroyed while the then generation of people was yet living. And the total destruction of the city and of the temple accompanied with fearful sights and signs of disaster; the persecution of His disciples, the apostasy of some, the faithfulness of others, and the spreading of His glorious Gospel throughout the Roman world, revealed the accuracy of the prediction in every detail. The prophecy that false Christs should arise after His death, is too well verified to require any lengthened statement here. But it may be worthy of mention that in the second century one Caziba set himself at the head of the Jewish people as their long expected Messiah. He chose a forerunner, raised an army and was anointed king. The army of Adrian was sent against him, and he with five or six thousand Jews were slain. In the fifth century another impostor rose named Moses Cretensius; after him came one Dunaan; then Julian, and for several centuries down to the twelfth the East was very fruitful in false Christs. In our own time there are many who pretend to repeat His divine works, though none seems to assume the Messianic name. But all only verify the prophecies uttered by the Divine One who foretold their coming. The New Testament prophecy, that false teachers should come into the infant church of Christ is sufficiently shown to have been fulfilled in the distressing fact, that within the first four centuries there were no fewer than 132 sects of Christians. It is very probable that the difference between most of them was very slight, but it is nevertheless true, the divisions were

caused by the dust of error bedimming the pure light of truth.

Once more, notice a few of the many prophecies concerning the Jewish people.

The book of Deuteronomy was written at least 3,300 years ago, and it contains the following concerning the Jewish people: "The Lord shall scatter these among all people from the one end of the earth even to the other." . . . "and thou shalt become an astonishment, and a proverb, and a by-word among all the nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee." In Leviticus, Jeremiah, Amos, and Hosea, similar prophecies concerning that people as a nation are made. These are all sufficiently explicit. No one need misunderstand them. Some of them were made in the halcyon days of Judah, and when there was no likelihood of such an event occurring. The question is, have they been fulfilled? And the answer is, "Where is the Jewish nation with all its ancient glory?" Yet the people are not destroyed. The Jew is a Jew everywhere; yet they are of no nation in the world. From the dispersion at the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 of the Christian era until now, they have found among the nations of the earth "no rest for the soles of their feet." The Jew is "a man without a country." Some call the United States their promised land. But it requires no prophet to foretell that should the formation of a Jewish state in it ever be attempted, the paradise would be made a garden of briers and thorns, with a flaming sword to protect it against Jewish ownership and government.

Again, the cup of their suffering as prophesied has

been filled to overflowing. Every civilized nation on earth excepting America, has persecuted them, simply because they were Jewish people. There only have they been always permitted to live without any disability; and only last month a Jewish rabbi was priviliged to open the Republican National Convention at St. Louis with prayer. But even liberty loving America in her proverbial good nature tolerates their persecution by Russia without protest, and cultivates the friendship of their most cruel persecutor of modern times. Russell, in his "Examination of the Bible," collates a table which shows the Jews were conquered by the Romans in A. D. 70, and were butchered, dispersed, and enslaved. They were suppressed with slaughter by Lusius in 117. Caesar Gallius crushed them as they rose to rebel in 352. They were expelled from Alexandria by Cyril in 415; persecuted for one hundred years in Persia from 430 to 530; cruelly tortured by Roman Catholics in Italy about 520; entirely outlawed by Justinian in 528; persecuted in Spain in 612; expelled from Medina by Mahommed in 623; plundered and scattered by France in 1010; massacred by Crusaders in Germany in 1096; robbed of large sums by Henry II. of England, and murdered wholesale in London in 1189; persecuted again by King John in 1210, and banished from England on penalty of death by Edward I. in 1290; expelled from all Papal states by Pope Pius V. in 1596, and from Russia in 1795. And so the heartsickening record continues, showing that the hand of every nation is dyed with Jewish blood, and the sword of every land has helped to disperse the nation

Israel. There can be no stronger testimony to the fulfillment of prophecy than the dispersion throughout the world of these people, and the maltreatment of the nationless Jews. They form one hand on the dial of history which unmistakeably points us to the truthfulness of God's holy Word. Sir Wm. Jones, perhaps the greatest lawyer, linguist, and philosopher of his day, said of it, "The antiquity of those compositions no man should doubt, for the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication is a solid ground of belief that they were genuine predictions." Sir Isaac Newton said, "I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatever." And the fresh light shining from these ancient suns of history which have risen from the darkness of the past, place their authenticity beyond dispute. It was David Hume, the infidel, who confessed he had never read the Bible *with attention*, and perhaps the chief reason for so much disloyalty to God, and scepticism concerning the Bible, is neglect to search with care and prayer, the Scriptures, and compare them with its contemporaneous histories. He who is the center of their truth and the luminary of their pages, said, "Search the writings for they testify of me."

CHAPTER V.

THE WRITINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ESPECIALLY ITS UNDISPUTED WRITINGS.

"*The word of our God shall stand forever.*" *Isaiah.*

The genius of true criticism is seen in research, deliberation, comparison, and judgment; and when it is applied to the Holy Bible it should be clothed with a spirit of reverence. Whatever else of value to the age he may be, the flippant smatterer who flings his sneer at the Scriptures on every street corner, over the social board, or across the office desk, or into newspaper column, or magazine article, as if it were a cheap tinselled rag, to be torn into fragments that the tatters might become a source of vanity to the scorner, or cheap sport to his audience, is not a capable critic.

It cannot, however, be denied that the assailants of the Bible too often possess just such a spirit. Nor is the one who is more concerned to win a victory than discover truth, an improvement on the critic of scornful vanity. Indeed, there are several books which contain criticisms of the Bible, which give the impression that the writers had not only been present at the crowning of King Saul, sat in Babylon with Daniel, and cheered that noble youth, been in all the battles of the wilderness with Joshua and Caleb, and themselves dictated on Sinai's peak that unsurpassed decalogue of morals

to Moses; but it seems as if they also had superintended the building of Noah's Ark, grown fruits and trimmed flowers in Eden's garden and managed the little job of creating this universe—so flippant and arrogant is their style. That spirit has no abiding place in discussing the text of sacred literature. It is in the valley of humility, and not on the hills of vanity, truth is discovered. The miner diligently digging in the sequestered spots of earth discovers gold; the clown in a circus finds a fool's cap and bells, and a gaping crowd. The Lord Himself said, "I thank thee oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, it has pleased thee to hide these things from the wise and prudent, and reveal them unto babes." The American apostle of infidelity has stated, "There are only three manuscripts upon which the Christian world relies for the authenticity of the New Testament. It is true, there are three very ancient manuscripts of the New Testament which are of great importance to the Christian world. But to say they are relied upon by Christians to prove the historic character of the New Testament, is contrary to fact. For, if they never existed, the facts of Christianity would not be affected in the least, and the Christ of the New Testament should remain still, the center of spiritual light and life, the Savior of men. The intelligent Christian world depends upon similar proof in establishing the truthfulness of these writings, to that which unbelievers rely upon in order to prove the authenticity of profane writings of like age. There are many books of antiquity whose authenticity no one denies. Their credibility is established according to rational rules of

criticism, and accepted as true without further question, though there is no manuscript of them in existence. Seneca wrote some books, a few years before Christ was born, and though we do not know of any manuscripts of them they are accepted as trustworthy because Tacitus and Quintillian, writers of his day, make reference to, and criticisms upon, his works. In the same manner are the works of Livy, Tacitus, Plato, Socrates, Cicero, and Demosthenes proved to be authentic, though some of them are centuries older than the writings of the New Testament. Why then is the New Testament not acccepted on similar evidence? Is it because the book claims to contain sacred and inspired writings? But that should not affect the weight of ordinary evidence in their favor, any more than proof of a title to church property should be subject to exceptional doubt or criticism. It is perhaps more than probable, prejudice has arisen against these writings because of the popular impression that the writers were ignorant men. However, this also is a false impression, for though they were not all learned in the schools, they were not ignorant men, as we to-day use that term. Their master Jesus, was unlearned in the schools, but the most reckless has never classed him as ignorant. Nor should the term ever be applied to his biographers and the writers of the New Testament.

Matthew had been a public taxgatherer, and therefore came from a class who were famous for their shrewdness and knowing in the devious ways of worldliness. He wrote his gospel to his Jewish brethren in the then prevailing Hebrew language, which is Syro-Chaldaic.

Mark was a promising young man of good family. He wrote to the dictation of St. Peter for the churches in Egypt and Italy.

Luke was a physician of at least some professional education, and wrote his gospel about fifteen years after Christ's ascension, and the Acts of the Apostles somewhat later.

John and James, as fishermen seem to have been in easy circumstances, and far above the average of their class. John was a man of great natural ability, a master of spiritual philosophy, who combined the contemplative and the practical in all his writings. He wrote his gospel to make known what the Lord had revealed concerning His divinity, and to contradict the heresy of the Ebionites, the unitarians of that age. Peter possessed many gifts which, when adorned by the Christian graces and enriched by experience, should save him from the charge of ignorance. Jude was a brother of our Lord, and Paul was as a Hercules in learning and a Gabriel in grace. There is no trace of infantile insolence, of the vulgarity of ignorance, nor of shiftless indifference in any of the books. Moreover, the writers were profoundly learned in the school of Christ, and in the college of experience, from whence the stores of life's richest treasures and the cream of its most inspiring thought, have come. Excepting glimpses of supplementary truth and gleams of ethereal glory vouchsafed to several of the more favored of them, the writers had seen, heard, and handled the truths which they penned. They had learned them from His lips during the three years they were with the Master; and

through fire and water, sickness and death they lived them, and labored in them for thirty years, ere the first of them was written. So that they wrote out of an unusual fund of knowledge, and after many years of training in the things of which they wrote.

And each letter was written by each writer without the knowledge of the other. Their writings were read in most of the churches during their lifetime on the Lord's Day, and there was every opportunity for discovering their character, whether true or false. History informs us, Polycarp was a pupil of St. John. Justin Martyr who was a disciple of Polycarp, was born ten years before John died. Barnabas, the companion of Paul, quoted from Matthew's gospel. Justin Martyr of the second century cites passages from all the gospels. Tertullian, Eusebius, and Cyprian who lived in the second and third centuries recognize these writings as "Scripture," "Divine Scripture," "Oracles of the Lord," "The writings of the evangelists and apostles." Celsus the noted infidel of the second century shows in his writings a close acquaintance with the gospels. Porphyry, another eminent controversialist against Christianity recognized their existence; and the apostate Emperor Julian of the fourth century makes mention of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and these witnesses, which, for irreligious purposes and secular writings would be considered excellent, bring us to the date of the existing New Testament manuscripts.

But there are undisputed writings contained in the New Testament which in themseves form a bulwark of evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament

which is unassailable. The epistles of Paul to the Romans, the two written by him to the Corinthian church, and his letter to the Galatians, have not been disputed by anyone recognized as an authority upon such questions. It is, of course, acknowledged that three of the destructive critics are known to have attacked the trustworthiness of these epistles. But more than one of the leaders of the same school of criticism have deemed these attacks of no importance and unworthy of serious notice. It is well for all Christendom to ponder this fact. For any impregnable truth of a generally accepted system such as Christianity which has been searched and sifted; anathematized and objurgated; cursed and scorned, and which after nineteen centuries of such treatment, must be admitted as historic, is worthy of highest respect and earnest advocacy. Indeed, it would be well for our Christian people, though not so well for the cause of unbelief, if this truth concerning these four epistles were more widely known. Not long ago I stated in a sermon that these letters had never been disputed, and a gentleman in the audience, who had been educated in part for the ministry of the Episcopalian church of England, came to me at the close of the service and said, "Sir, I think you must have made a mistake. For I ceased studying for the ministry because of the prevailing belief among my circle which was fairly representative of educated society, that there is no book in the New Testament which had been universally accepted by any critical school as historically true." And yet the evidence upon which they are so received is easily accessible to any student

of church history. The history of Christian literature from the period succeeding the church of the apostles contains positive evidence that these four epistles existed. They were rapidly disseminated throughout the various Christian communities, and their teachings obeyed by the authorities in the several churches as the writings of the apostle Paul.

St. Paul died some time between the years 64 and 67. A little more or less than twenty years later two writings are met with: one is dated from Rome towards the close of the reign of the Emperor Domitian in the year 95, and the other was composed at Alexandria about the same time. The first is a letter from Clement, who was then one of the presbyters of the Christian church in Rome. He was instructed to write to the Christian church in which existed some opposition to the minister of it who had been appointed by the apostle. Even the names are mentioned of the deputies appointed to carry the letter to Corinth and use their good offices in trying to heal the breach. This letter of Clement was afterwards read frequently in the church of Corinth and then placed in its archives. A letter written sixty years afterwards by the then minister (Mr. Deny's) to the minister (Mr. Soter) of the church in Rome says, "We have to-day celebrated the holy day of our Lord and read your letter; and are careful to read and re-read for our correction, the one written to as by Clement."[1] In his letter to Corinth Clement wrote, "Why do you disagree and scatter the members of Christ, and carry your dissensions to such an extent that we forget we

[1] Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, IV, 31.

are members one of another? *Refer again to the letter of the blessed apostle Paul.* What did he write to you at the beginning when the Gospel was first preached to you? . . . Now you see who those are who trouble you and destroy your brotherly love. These things that we have heard are a disgrace unto you, and unworthy of Christians, that one or two men should lead the old established church of Corinth to rebel against the elders. And this report has not only reached us, but also others who are strangers to our faith, so that on account of your folly the name of the Lord is blasphemed."

The second writing to which reference has been made is the epistle of Barnabas. In it there are quoted the exact words of St. Paul in the 13th chapter of Romans: "Behold I have given thee Abraham as a father to the Gentiles who believed in God, in a state of uncircumcision," and also words from the epistle to the Corinthians, showing that the church of Alexandria possessed in Barnabas, her minister, these two epistles of Paul. At the end of the first century, these four epistles had been communicated to other churches by those who received them. Irenæus in Gaul, Clement in Egypt, Tertullian in Western Africa, who lived and labored as the heads of their several districts in the church, state how the apostolic epistles were the property of the church, and were deposited as such in the house of one of the elders.[1] About the year 140 A. D. one Marcion taught at Rome, a doctrine entirely opposed to those contained in these epistles, and Irenæus also appealed to these writings of

[1] Tertullian, Against Marcion, IV, 5.

Paul, and to the gospels for proof that he did not teach Christian doctrine.[1] He also added, "Every question will be cleared up for him, when he has read attentively the Scriptures which are kept in the houses of those who are presbyters in the church."[2]

Soon after the middle of the second century a translation of these writings of Paul into the Syriac language was prepared, and distributed in the eastern portion of the Christian church. In the West a Latin translation of them appeared about the same time, and in the library of Milan a most important document was found by Muratori bearing on this question. It dates from the year 160 A. D. and was probably composed in the name of one of the early Christian churches of the West which desired to instruct others in these writings. Dr. Godet in writing of this document says: "After having spoken of the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, the author goes on to say, 'As to the epistles of Paul they speak for themselves, as to what places they were sent, and for what purpose they were written. Paul especially forbade the Corinthians to indulge in the schism of heresy; the Galatians to practice circumcision, and he expounded to the Romans the plan of the Scriptures showing how Christ is the beginning, and the end of them." Therefore, we conclude, because these writings were in possession of the early Christian churches, copied, quoted, and discussed alike by Christian, infidel, and heathen as the writings of St. Paul, and handed down from generation to generation, they have been

[1] Heretics, IV, 32.

[2] Ibid.

accepted as indisputable. They may contain chaff or grain in their subject-matter, but they are facts. They may be false or true in doctrine, but they are history. They may be inspired, or mere human productions, but they are neither traditions nor myths. They are in the church and in the world as a rock immovable, and always recognized as one against which the seas of unbelieving criticism have gently flowed and mildly frowned, but whose existence they have been unable reasonably to deny.

And these *undisputed* writings of Christianity are of incalculable benefit to the church of Christ and the great army of truth seekers. They contain all the essential truths of the doctrine and polity in the Christian system. They tell of man as spiritually lost, an alien to God. They reveal the man Christ Jesus as a world's Savior. They teach the penitent of his regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

They promise final reward to the righteous and punishment to the wicked, and reveal the church of God as a family, with Jesus as its elder brother. Therefore, though it were shown that Moses wrote mistakes only; that the rest of the Bible was a myth, or unreliable tradition, a mere dream of the superstitious, the religion of Jesus Christ would not have lost its revelation. For in these undisputed epistles we have the whole story. King Jesus on His way to glory by way of Calvary's cross for the sinful is here. His infinite love shines undimmed here: the Gospel's ever brightening hope of immortality, its crowning triumph over the dark, cold grave is here. The noblest inspiration, a divine enthusi-

asm for every life is here. In these undisputed epistles we have nothing less than all the fundamental doctrines of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Oh, that proud unbelief, perplexing doubt, and delusive indifference would lend their ear, and hear that notwithstanding their fickle moods, foolish foibles, and defiant scorn there still remains one boulder of the quarry of eternal truth which nothing under the stars can remove or ruin: a boulder upon which if anyone will humbly stand he shall behold life's difficulties o'ercome, the yawning gulf of death bridged, and the dazzling spiritual splendors of the Christ of God forevermore. But should anyone fall upon it in the sullenness or strife of wicked rebellion, "it were better for such he had never been born."

CHAPTER VI.

THE STORY OF THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE BIBLE.

"*Bring when thou comest . . . the parchments.*" *Paul.*

Eminent specialists in Biblical lore tell us there are 1,021 acknowledged manuscripts of the Bible in existence, which are dated variously from the year 325 A. D., to the thirteenth century. These are distributed chiefly among the great libraries throughout the civilized world. Two hundred and fifty of them may be found in England, about one-half of which are in Oxford; seventy-five in the British museum in London; twenty-four in Lambeth Palace; nineteen in the libraries at Cambridge; seventeen in the library of Robert Curzon in Essex; and the remainder are in other places. Scotland possesses seven of them and Ireland, three. Italy contains three hundred and twenty—more than one-half of which are in Rome, and over one hundred are in the Vatican library. Fifty are in Florence, twenty in Turin, nine in Naples, fifty in Venice, six in Modena, two in Messina, and a few are scattered. Two hundred and fifty-eight are in the Imperial library in Paris, and there are ten others supposed to be in France. In Germany and Austria there are ninety; Vienna has twenty-eight; Munich, twenty-seven; Hamburg, six; Pesth, two; and others are at various other places throughout the country. Russia has over seventy, of which the

most important are in St. Petersburg. There are nineteen in Spain: one in Toledo, and all the rest are in the Escurial (the king's palace), at Madrid. Switzerland possesses fourteen; Holland, six; Denmark, three; and Sweden, one.

Parts of some of these manuscripts exist in separate libraries, though they are none the less treasured on that account, and only about thirty contain all the books of the Old and New Testaments. Two of exceptional value because of their age, were discovered in fragments, one portion of which is now in the library at St. Petersburg, while the other parts are in the Bodlean library of Oxford.

It is, however, of the three most ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures that I wish to relate the story which on my part is merely a collation of facts brought forth from their obscurity. These manuscripts are known to Bible students as the Alexandrian, the Vatican, and the Sinaitic, each deriving its name either from the place where it was discovered, or is now kept.

The Alexandrian manuscript was found in Egypt, and is now kept in the British Museum. It was presented to Charles I. in 1628 by the Patriarch of Constantinople, who brought it from Egypt for that purpose. And when in 1753 the British Museum was founded, it was transferred from the royal private library to the great national depositary. It is in four volumes, three of which contain the Old Testament in the Greek version, and the fourth contains the New Testament version, though it is acknowledged by all competent critics to have many defects. The Patriarch of Constantinople

who secured it during his previous patriarchate in Egypt, testified that the report concerning it is as follows: "It was copied by Thecla, a Christian lady from among the nobility, thirteen hundred years previous to his having secured it." Thecla is generally regarded as a friend and valued assistant of Gregory Nazianzum who lived in the fourth century. Nearly all the critics agree that the manuscript is as old as the fifth century. The vellum of this ancient book on which it is written is well preserved, though in many places holes appear in several pages, and the material is so fragile that it is kept under glass. The privilege of handling it is allowed to none excepting the most competent scholars, and it is accorded to such only for the purposes of textual study. The letters in which it is written are called uncial, and are round and large. There is no separation between the words, though sometimes marks of punctuation appear. The text is divided into sections called heads, and the paragraphs and periods are marked by a new line and a capital letter. This manuscript is the most ancient in which capital letters occur. Each page has two columns, each containing fifty lines, with about twenty letters to the line. Judging from the facsimile of the plate contained in the English edition of "Horne's Introduction to the Bible," the writing appears like so many small capital letters joined together, and must be most difficult to read. This manuscript was the first to be carefully applied to the correction of the text of the New Testament by that great critical scholar Patrick Young, the librarian to King Charles I. Three

separate copies of it were first made by different scholars; then in 1786 the text was published, and thus this ancient document was given to the world by the printing press. So accurate was that edition that when compared with the manuscript there were discovered errors in only *two letters*.

The Vatican manuscript was, until recently, considered the most important one in the possession of the Christian world. The Vatican library—where it was discovered and still remains—was founded by Pope Nicholas V. in the year 1448. More than 100,000 volumes are therein deposited, among which are 25,000 manuscripts. This manuscript of the Bible is labelled "Codex B 1209," in the class catalogue of the library, and has probably occupied a place in it from the time of its establishment. Previous to its location there, it is believed to have belonged to a learned Greek priest named Bessarion. His house in Rome was an academy on a small scale, the repositary of a large collection of ancient manuscripts and the resort of learned men. This manuscript is perhaps one hundred years older than the Alexandrian one, and according to the best critics of the age, of writing material, it belongs to the fourth century. Indeed, several of them assign it to the year 325.

The whole of the text is bound in one volume which measures ten and a half inches in length, ten in breadth, and four or five in thickness. It does not, however, contain the whole Bible. The text is also uncial, of the same character as, only a little smaller than, those of the Alexandrian manuscript. There are no di-

visions between its words, but some times there is a space between the words to denote a change of subject by the author. The titles to the various books are written on the top of the pages, words are added and letters retouched by later copyists, and the withering touch of time has faded the ink of the text, all indicating the great age of this document.

This celebrated manuscript has always been considered of the highest value in determining the true readings of the text of Scripture. And yet we are most credibly informed that it was with great difficulty any scholars outside the official circle within the Vatican gained access to its pages. Indeed, the jealousy with which it was guarded was equalled only by the reluctance of the Popish authorities to publish it. Both are well illustrated by the unsuccessful attempts made by great Biblical scholars to study and copy its contents. Not until the beginning of this century was any earnest effort made in this direction. The first, though only partially successful, was undertaken by Cardinal Mai, and completed in 1838. That work, however, never received the approval of the censors of the press in the Church of Rome, and it was only after Garibaldi's struggles for freedom the Cardinal was at liberty to publish it. He originally offered a copy of it to a publisher in Berlin, but that was, however, declined. After the Cardinal's death the work was published in a mutilated form by order of the Pope. In 1843 Dr. Tischendorf, in 1845 Dr. Tregelles, and in 1861 Dean Alford—all in turn—visited the Pope of Rome for the purpose of obtaining permission to copy its contents, but without avail.

However, in 1866 Tischendorf made another attempt with better success. Before this time he had discovered the Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible and had it published, and a copy of it sent to the Pope. Armed with letters of introduction from many dignitaries in Europe, he went forth on his mission once more, and after a long diplomatic war between himself and the representatives of the Pope, he succeeded in obtaining for a limited time permission to study it three hours daily. In 1867 the copy was published in the common Greek type. Thus the contents of this buried treasure of the fourth century became the property of the learned world, and its history known to mankind.

But perhaps the most interesting, as well as the most valuable, is the story of the Sinaitic manuscript.

Helena was the name of the mother of Constantine the Great, who was the first Christian emperor of Rome, and she was also a Christian. Many stories, true and false, of her piety and charity are told, and many spots in Palestine have monuments to her sweet memory. Nearly two hundred years after her death the emperor Justinian built a church on what was believed to be Mount Sinai, and also a fortress to protect it. To-day, however, there is only one group of buildings there known as the Convent of St. Catherine, and named after a martyred niece of St. Helena. Travelers tell us the buildings are quite as much fortress, as a church or convent. Here, through many centuries, a brotherhood of monks has had its home. Here a rich library grew up in course of the centuries in which their seclusion had enabled them to pursue their own course unmo-

lested, whether it was sacred or secular. Once on a time the convent was the resort of many pilgrims, who went there from Egypt and Syria, Constantinople and Rome. They took with them manuscripts and other treasures, and gave them as offerings to the monks to enrich the value of their library. But long ago these pilgrimages ceased, because the zeal of the monks for sacred learning and a holy life waned, until the place became more like a large hotel in the desert for travelers, where prayers are said morning and evening, than a convent or monastery. As illustrative of the ignorance and indolence of these men, though banished upon one of the earth's sacred spots, where all the glory and the grandeur of the supernatural clothe with their halo the secular, there lay buried for unknown ages this ancient manuscript of the New Testament, called the Sinaitic. And it was saved from destruction in a place which should have been for all such literature a sacred and safe asylum, only by the providential arrival of Tischendorf, one of the greatest of European Biblical scholars. This man in his researches had concluded there must be a large store of precious manuscripts "hidden in dust and darkness" in these eastern monasteries. Therefore, in the spring of 1844 he embarked for Egypt and Syria. In May of the same year he started for Sinai, and arrived at the convent on the 24th of the same month. He says in his description of the convent, "The only entrance to it is thirty feet high to which the visitor is pulled up by a rope." He was allowed free access to the library which he found very rich in manuscripts. As he examined the volumes upon the

shelves his eye fell upon a large basket full of old parchments standing upon the floor, apparently considered of no value, and waiting only to be used as fire kindlings. Upon turning over the mouldered pieces he found to his great surprise a number of leaves of the Old Testament in Greek, which bore evidence of being more ancient than any he had ever seen. He was permitted to take forty-three leaves of the manuscript which proved to be parts of the books of Chronicles, Nehemiah, Esther, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Isaiah, of the Old Testament. But during this visit nothing more could be gained, as in proportion as Tischendorf's interest grew these hitherto despised papers quickly increased in value in the eyes of the monks. In 1853—ten years afterwards—he again stood beneath the walls of the convent waiting to be hoisted by the rope, but when he reached the library not a trace of the coveted parchments could be found. Three years later he applied to the Russian government for a commission to make an eastern journey in the interests of Biblical science, thinking thereby to attain his object. After some delay this was granted, and in 1859 he started the third time for the convent in the desert. This time he was welcomed most heartily, and the custodian of the books showed him every courtesy, but to his great regret he could nowhere find the desired parchments. Only three days before he was to leave for home he walked out with the steward of the convent. After their return the steward informed him that he also had been reading the Septuagint—a Greek version of the Old Testament Scriptures—

and as he spoke he placed in the hands of Tischendorf a bulky volume wrapped in red cloth. Immediately the great scholar knew his wish was fulfilled; and therein he found the very fragments he had taken from the waste-basket fifteen years before, with other parts of the Old Testament, the whole of the New, the epistle of Barnabas already referred to, and some other epistles of minor importance. He was permitted to take the volume to his room where he literally danced for joy, and for several nights afterwards he felt as though it were wickedness to sleep.

After much negotiation, it was presented or loaned by the monks of the convent to the Emperor of Russia as head of the Greek church, by whom it was deposited in the library at St. Petersburg. In due time Tischendorf with the aid of assistants made an edition of it in facsimile, and by the munificence of the Emperor of Russia a copy was sent to every great institution and library throughout the Christain world.

This Sinaitic manuscript which is marked A in Greek has three hundred and forty-six leaves, one hundred and ninety-nine contain portions of the Old Testament, while the balance is comprised of the whole New Testament writings, and some other epistles. Thus, it was after great toil and expense, much opposition and criticism these priceless manuscripts have been brought forth from the obscurity of the ages into the light of modern day by Christian scholarship, to confirm the already abundant, indisputable evidence of the historic character of the manuscripts of the Bible.

The question is often asked, "How do experts know

the age of parchments?" And one answer is, in a similar manner to that by which an expert knows the age of a certain style in dress. The style of the letters is studied closely, and their special peculiarities reveal the secrets of their time, and sometimes even the hand of the writer. For example, the employment of uncials already described, instead of letters in another form proves the manuscript to belong to the age in which that style of writing prevailed. Also, the fact that the writing was executed in vellum, would show it was not written during the later centuries in which the rougher paper, made of cotton rags, was used. Again, if there are several columns upon a single page, which was the style of arrangement employed in writing on a papyrus roll, it would reveal such writing to belong to the period when papyri prevailed. Therefore, the evidence of this kind used in determining the age of a manuscript is in no way misleading. And in every age there has been sufficient interest taken in writings of antiquity, critical examination, and diligent comparison made by scholars so as to reach accurately, at least the approximate date of the manuscript investigated. Moreover, when impostors have attempted to deceive the world by submitting to it a forged manuscript it has invariably been followed by speedy detection. Indeed, it has been confidently asserted that there are at least fifty persons in Britain alone, besides those in other Christian lands, who by these tests would at once detect the most highly finished imitation of manuscript writing that the most clever dishonesty could produce. From these manuscripts it is seen that the Bible is the only ancient

book of the many literary treasures of antiquity which are so highly prized, that can lay claim to such strong historic evidence as these manuscripts furnish. And this is evidence which would be considered valid in any court in a civilized land: therefore, we conclude there is no book read in Christendom whose historic character is so fully sustained, or creditably vouched for, as that of the Bible.

And by criticism and translation of these manuscripts, and others containing the sacred writings, we received our English Bible in its present form, and almost perfect text. From these ancient texts there were versions made in Latin, Syriac, and Chaldee, and then into English. These sacred writings which we call "our Bible," were not revealed or produced in a day; they were things of growth whose obscure seed has brought forth a most bountiful harvest of divine truth, to every humble home and believing heart.

The first old Anglo-Saxon version of the Bible was produced, we are told, in the seventh century by a monk named Cædman. Then fifty years afterwards the venerable Bede died while writing another. Edfred the King of England also closed his life while engaged in the translation of the Bible into the common tongue. William of Shoreham, and Richard Rolle prepared a partial Bible in English in the year 1330, and twenty-five years after was begun the version of John Wycliffe and Nicholas Hereford which was not finished until 1380, and it was the first complete English Bible published. It is needless to mention that all of these completed efforts were banned by the Church of Rome, as also by

the state. It was not until the Protestant Reformation dawned, the Christian world obtained the first printed copy of an English Bible. In 1526 William Tyndale published the Bible in the mother tongue of the English people, for which incalculable boon to the world he and one of his assistants (John Frith), were burnt at the stake. But the printing press became a handmaid of Christianity which multiplied the Word, and the ashes of the martyr publishers were seeds which increased ten thousand fold. Several versions followed during the sixteenth century which were either reproductions of Tyndale's translation, or revisions of versions that had been based upon it. In 1582 the Roman Catholic church began, and in 1609 completed the Douay Bible. This version does not differ essentially from the authorized version used by the Protestants, though much has been affirmed to the contrary. The greatest objection to it is that notes are appended to the text which contain the church's interpretation of it, and in so far as that is arbitrary it debars the reader from the right of private judgment. In 1611 during the reign of James I., the King's Bible, or, as it was frequently called, "the King James Version," was translated and published; and has since been used by Protestant Christendom, as the Authorized Version of the Bible. It is the result of commendable and scholarly effort to unify the various independent versions which then existed. In 1881 the revised version of the New Testament, and that of the Old Testament in 1885 was published; and though it contains many improvements upon the authorized version, it is hardly likely to soon, if

ever, supersede the older one, though only time can determine. But it is a great cause for profoundest gratitude to the God of our fathers that we have received under His guiding hand, and by the diligence of His servants, not only the Bible in our native tongue whose historic character is authentic, but we have the book in the best possible translation of it, by the combined scholarship of Britain and America. Surely this age should realize its God-given privilege, and its parallel responsibility to our generation for this common heritage of an open and accurate Bible. If we discard it we throw aside the history of human progress in all that uplifts humanity. Deny it its rightful place and power, and with it shall wither the arm of right, palsied shall become the tongue of truth, omnipotent shall might be over right, darkness over light, moral and spiritual death over life. And soon then shall there be written over the hearth in every home, over the throne of every heart, and upon the banner of every nation the irrevocable words of the doomsman, "Ichabod! Ichabod! thy glory hath departed!"

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN AND HOW WAS THE BIBLE CANONIZED?

"The Bible is the only rule of faith and obedience."

Westminster Divines.

The word canon means rule, a straight staff, a measuring rod. In things moral and religious it means a guide or model. So among religious writers it meant a leading principle, a divine writing, or law, applied to religious life. It gradually developed until it meant a type of Christian doctrine which distinguished the orthodox from the heretical. Because of this latest use of it the plural word "canons" was used of ecclesiastical regulations, and people of old spoke of "the canons of the church." Most people are acquainted with the falsehood, many times refuted, that the Bible as we have it was never recognized as such until centuries after the age of the apostles, when it was received by a church council, and thereby canonized. The evident truth is, those books comprising the Bible were received as the rule of religious faith and life by the people at the time when they were written. Of course, it is one thing to have them accepted as an authoritative rule of life by the people who received them, and another to receive them in a church council or assembly, in one or more volumes of a book. The latter is an empty form which can give at best only an official sanction, but the

former is the act of acceptance by the people of God of the Scriptures as their canon of faith, which is the essential substance of the whole question.

It may be seen at a glance that the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses, was not received by any formal resolution in order to obtain its high place of divine authority in the church of the wilderness. These books, we now conclude, are at least true records of history; and as such we are permitted to admit them into court, and hear their testimony on this question. They tell us the five books of Moses were, when finished, reverently accepted, and carefully deposited in the Ark of the Covenant. In Deut. 31: 24–26 we read, "And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book until they were finished . . . he commanded the Levites . . . saying, take the book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be here for a witness against thee." That is a plain declaration, concerning the how and when of these books that no one can fail to understand, and none need hesitate to receive. It also seems that Joshua added his book to the volume of the Pentateuch, for we read in Joshua 1: 8; 24: 26, that, "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God." As Alexander has stated in his "Old Testament Canon," "there can be no reasonable doubt that copies of these books were written before the original was deposited in the holy place." Otherwise, there could have been no copies for use among the people, and such were essentially necessary. The writings contained in some of the six books were of great inter-

est to the whole nation, and of inestimable value to the proper conduct of its civic affairs. They did not contain only the all important statutes and ordinances for the guidance of their religious life, but in them was recorded the division of the land among the tribes. They were not only a rule of faith, a canon of Scripture, but a code of national law. Therefore, it was as necessary for access to be had to these writings, as for land owners to have access to the registry of their title deeds for consultation. Further, we read that one of the laws concerning the duties of rulers, or kings, of Israel was, that he, when appointed, should write a copy of these in his own hand. Besides this, there were scribes whose special duty it was to make copies of these books of the law. It is also stated by Josephus that "By the direction of Moses a copy of the law was prepared for each of the tribes of Israel." From this evidence we have a glimpse of the manner in which these books were received as authoritative, supplied for general use, and guarded with the greatest jealousy. And though there is no specific statement concerning the reception and care of the remaining books of the Old Testament, they were doubtless similarly canonized. It is apparent that they assumed a place of prominence or obscurity in the life of the nation, in proportion as it was faithful or unfaithful to God. Sometimes these writings were greatly neglected, and during the wicked and idolatrous reigns of Manasseh and Amon the original writings had well nigh perished; it is generally believed that the autograph letters of Moses were then destroyed. But under the pious reign of Josiah, when the religious tone

of the people was healthy, they were discovered by him among the rubbish of the temple. Judging from the Scriptural account given, it would seem Josiah was entirely ignorant of the existence of the book until he had discovered and read it. But though this neglect of these books frequently prevailed, it cannot be rationally believed that all in the nation were as the wicked royalists, nor can it be reasonably doubted that some private copies were possessed by pious men.

The desire to know what became of these Old Testament writings during the captivity of Judah as a nation, has often been expressed. And the only information available is that those deposited in the ark and the sacred vessels of the sanctuary were destroyed. However, even this is not a sufficient reason for the belief, so general, that the lost Scriptures were restored by tradition or miracle. At least the best authorities agree in saying that the theory so courageously set forth that Ezra after the return from the captivity restored the lost Scriptures by the miraculous influence of the Divine Spirit is a fable, and never was in harmony with the facts, nor the faith of the church. There was no necessity for such a miracle, or for depending entirely on tradition for the replacement of the lost Scriptures. The books were not all lost. In the 9th chapter of the book of Daniel we are informed that he possessed a copy of these Scriptures. He quotes from them in several portions of his book, and makes express mention of the prophecies of Jeremiah. Moreover, all the Jews were not taken captive to Babylon. There was a remnant left with Jeremiah the prophet, and, for as long as he lived

after the captivity, he was in regular communication with many of his captive brethren in Babylon. It was part of his duty to record the words spoken in these books, and from what is known of his faithfulness, Jeremiah was not likely to neglect this important work. Indeed, the more reasonable conclusion is, that he would in the peculiar circumstances in which the Israelites were placed, find special delight in making copies of the history, the law, the prophets, and the psalms, that they might be read in exile, and also found in use when the people returned to their native land. For Jeremiah was the prophet of the restoration and a strong believer in the future deliverance of the people.

And if it were necessary to supply by tradition any missing portion of the Scriptures, and thus aid in their preservation there is no reason why it should not be considered reliable. It is almost notorious that there are many Scotchmen who can recite accurately the whole of Burns' poems. There are many old ladies among that favored race, any half dozen of whom could reproduce from memory the whole Bible. Indeed, I believe in this country Messrs. Moody and Torey, Drs. Brooks, Munhall, Chapman, Pierson and others who make a specialty of memorizing the Bible could from memory restore to us our Bible, if by any catastrophe to-day the printed copies and manuscripts should be destroyed. And those eastern people were famous for the cultivation of memory, so that it should not be considered an incredible feat, though the pious amongst them had produced portions of their Scriptures by oral tradition.

But Ezra also used in captivity at least a copy of the law of Moses. For we read in the book of Ezra that after a partial return of the people under Cyrus and when the building of the second temple was completed, the functions of the priests and Levites were regulated "as it is written in the book of Moses." This was many years before Ezra himself returned to Jerusalem. And after the complete restoration of the people to their native land we again read in the book of Nehemiah that a great conclave was held. They gathered from all parts of their fatherland to meet on the hill-top of Jerusalem—so sacred to their race.

Three-fourths of a century had passed and gone in a foreign land since the Jewish people had assembled together on that height. They had heard the songs of Zion in that strange land, they had seen the tears of their fathers flow in sorrow as they hung their harps on the willows, and pined away on the banks of the Babylonian rivers. Those now assembled had been captive children playing on a tyrant's soil. Their youthful aspirations had been stirred as they heard the stories of their God-given homes wrecked and ruined by cruel captors, from the lips of their bondaged ancestors. And their hearts became filled with hate for their foemen, their lives were inspired to nobler purposes and holier aims as their fathers and mothers read for them the sacred precepts from the book of the God of their fathers. Now, when once more their feet tread their native soil, and their eyes behold its desolations, and their hearts thrill under the inspiration of its sacred memories they come

together to worship the God of their fathers, on that sacred spot, to read the sacred books read by their fathers. Before the throng of 50,000 people Ezra the scribe ascended a pulpit erected in the street, and "he blessed the Lord the great God"; he also "read from the book of the law of Moses from morning till noon," and the influence of this service upon the multitude was so divinely uplifting, the whole scene was so enthusing that eastern-like they leapt for joy, and rent the air with hallelujahs, and shouted amen! and amen! So there could be little necessity for producing the book by a dubious oral tradition, and none whatever to have it restored by miracle. We are told by historians and other writers that there existed in Ezra's time a great synagogue of writers, or scribes, consisting of one hundred and twenty men, of which Daniel had formerly been a member, who assisted in preparing copies of the Scriptures for the various tribes of Israel. But in the words of Dr. Alexander, "it is very absurd to suppose that all these lived at one time and formed one synagogue, as they are pleased to represent it; for, from the time of Daniel to that of Simon the Just no less than two hundred and fifty years intervened." It is beyond question the synagogue existed for the purpose of multiplying copies of the Scriptures, and preserving them for the church and nation, but it is probable its members did not all live at the same time, but were successors of their predecessors, as in a church, trustees, and sometimes elders are succeeded by others to maintain the work. Indeed the view so long accepted that Ezra completed the canon of

the Old Testament cannot be easily sustained, and seems almost untenable. Nehemiah mentions in his book the names of great men in Persia who lived one hundred years after Ezra. The first book of Chronicles contains the genealogy of the sons of Zerubbabel, at least to the time of Alexander the Great. Therefore, this book could not have been placed in the canon by Ezra; nor could the books of Malachi and Esther, as these lived long after the time of that prophet. From all the facts that can be gathered on this point, the true conclusion seems to be that this synagogue was organized in the time of Daniel—probably by Ezra—and the members arranged, collected, and made copies of the sacred books, and pious and learned men succeeded them, and maintained the organization until the whole canon of the Old Testament Scriptures was completed, about the time of Simon the Just, who was high priest about twenty-five years after the death of Alexander the Great.

It seems the Old Testament Scriptures were divided into three volumes, and distributed in that form as the book of the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiography, meaning "the writings." The latter comprised the Psalms, Job, Ruth, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, and Chronicles; and it is thus these books were received almost universally as the canon of Scripture in the third century before Christ, and in this form the Savior recognized and spake of them. (Luke 24:44.)

Readers of history who know the terrible sufferings of the Jews during those three centuries, may well won-

der how these writings were preserved amid all the storms of national strife and tumults of war. I seek to emphasize the fact already stated that, "God never leaves himself without a witness." At the right time, and in the right place he is forthcoming. And in Ptolemy Philadelphus, the Syrian king who began to reign 280 years B. C., such a witness seems to have been found. He distinguished himself by his uniform kindness to the Jewish nation; ransomed many who had been sold as slaves, and invited many to settle in Egypt. He was also a liberal patron of literature and science, built a famous library in Alexandria, and caused a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures to be translated into Greek which was called the Septuagint. This beneficent act multiplied the copies and disseminated a knowledge of the Scriptures, as this version had a wide circulation, was extensively read in a different tongue than the Hebrew, and secured for them a safety which the troublous times did not otherwise guarantee. Its value to the Jews was, however, greatly marred by the addition to it of some apocryphal writings, such as the books of Maccabees, and by Jewish prejudices against Grecian influences. It was, for these and other reasons, never sanctioned by the Jewish Sanhedrin—the chief council of that church—though it bridges the gulf of time between the last of the Jewish prophets—Malachi —and the advent of our Savior, and is therefore an important witness of the canon of Scripture.

Josephus, who lived in the time of our Lord, informs us that there were in his day "Twenty-two books, which by the Jews were believed to be divine." If it is con-

sidered that at that time the two books of Kings were one book, also those of Samuel one, and those of the Chronicles one; Jeremiah and Lamentations were counted one, also Ezra and Nehemiah and the twelve minor prophets as one, thus with the book of Ruth added to Judges as was customary by the earlier Jews, we have the same books of the Old Testament Scriptures which then comprised the canon, and are now denominated the thirty-nine books of the Jewish Bible.

Moreover, our Lord Himself and His apostles are witnesses of greatest import to this canon of the Old Testament. In Luke 24: 44 He speaks of them as, "The law, the prophets, and the psalms"; and in Mark 14: 49 He refers to them as an infallible rule which must be fulfilled, and which cannot be broken. The apostle Paul when referring to the Scriptures of the Old Testament said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God"; "these are able to make you wise unto salvation." Others of the apostolic band spake of them as, "The Oracles of God," "The Word of God," "The engrafted word which is able to save your souls." Some of the early fathers of the Christian church who had not been trained as Jews, and were unacquainted with the Jewish Scriptures made diligent inquiries concerning them, and found these things were so; and several catalogues of these same books were prepared not only by several individuals, but by councils of the Christian church

The methods by which the New Testament was canonized are necessarily the same as those applied to the Old Testament books. As they were written and received by the people as the writings of the apostles, and

evangelists, they became part of the canon of Scripture. Writers within the pale of the Roman Catholic communion assert with the authorities of that church that these Scriptures have no authority more than Esop's fables without the assent of that church. In other words, these books of themselves are not the rule of religious faith, unless made so by the vote of a church council. Hence the belief that the Bible is composed of books which suit the church's fancy, and were accordingly canonized by the church, has become general, with the deplorable result that the authority of Scripture has been weakened among many people. But a little reflection would serve to show that no church can make error truth, or truth error, and has no special light or power by which it can determine what books shall be recognized as the Word of God. That Word has always revealed and declared itself as unmistakably as the light of the sun shows it is not darkness, or, as the fragrance of the flower cannot be mistaken for the odor of boiled roots. The church, however, ought to be able to decide what books *have the marks* of inspiration upon them, and this only is what the early Christian church and the Protestant church have done. Any book written by an apostle or evangelist, or known to have been accepted by the apostles and their followers as forming their rule of faith, was received as authoritative by the infant Christian churches. In endeavoring to discover whether they ought to have been so received the Protestant church has always applied the most rigid tests. Their style and contents have been tried by contemporaneous witnesses; by citations from and references to the

writings from early Christian and anti-Christian writers of the first three centuries, and the catalogue or lists of these sacred books made by them. And because those books were believed by the Christian church to endure these tests, they have been accepted as genuine through all the history of the Christian church, from the third century until now. It is true, this belief has not been held either unanimously or universally by the church; for there has nearly always existed a difference of opinion concerning the authority of *some* of the books. But even this difference only led to greater diligence and closer scrutiny, and to a more searching criticism of the text, until to-day the books comprising the canon of Scripture are more intelligently and confidently received by the Christian church than probably ever before. And one well known result of these careful methods has been the elimination from the number of the authoritative books of the Bible, the books of the Maccabees, Tobith, Judith, Wisdom, the epistles of Clement, of Barnabas, and of the Shepherd of Herman, known as the apocryphal writings. It should also be noted that the evidence for each book is not equally strong, but it is sufficiently formidable in the weakest, to lead the Christian world to accept it as the writing in which is found eternal life.

If the reader will add the evidence given in former chapters of this volume concerning the authenticity and genuineness of the gospels and epistles, to the considerations of the methods by which the New Testament canon was formed, the conclusion that these were read in the Christian churches, and received as their rule of

faith, and thereby made part of the canon of Scripture becomes irresistible.

Therefore, let our liveliest gratitude arise to the God of the Bible for the gift of this treasure, that we may rightly prize it above the price of rubies. "It is a perfect rule," straight as a line, clear as the light, more consoling to the troubled than human sympathy, and more loving than the human heart. And with what compassion should we pity those who neglect or reject it; for as it is placed on the truth, which is the firmest foundation for any book, and shines forth in its unbedimmed brightness amid the freshest and most luminous light of this critical age, it is for all the rule of faith, the foundation of character, the inspiration of life, the dying pillow on which mankind may peacefully repose, and the ladder upon which all may at last ascend into glory, out of this gloom.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BIBLE VERSUS ITS CRITICS.

(*a*) Scientific critics.
(*b*) Textual critics.

"*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*" *Paul.*

Daniel Webster, one of America's greatest statesmen, said on a memorable occasion, "I am not going to discuss politicians, but principles." In this chapter I shall endeavor to follow his maxim and discuss not critics, but criticisms of the Bible. Every man has a right to his own opinion, for each one holds it at one's own peril.

It is reasonable to believe that most of the adverse criticism of the Bible arises from misapprehension, prejudice, or human pride. One fruitful source of these is the manner in which the Bible is often considered. For example, it is no uncommon occurrence for some critics to treat some of its poetic and apocalyptic passages as if they were narratives of history. Or they approach it with the preconceived idea that it was originally written to teach science, and many frequently blame the original writers, whether Moses or John, for the mistakes of translators. Some also possess the notion that each reader of the Bible should be able to understand and explain it fully, and of course they find the Scriptures do not harmonize with their opinions and

they in consequence reject the book. It would, however, be just as reasonable for anyone to forever close one's eyes to the lustre of yonder sun, because the various theories of light do not harmonize with the alleged certainties of science, as it is to reject the Bible for any or all of such reasons. The Bible cannot reasonably be blamed, if the feeble understanding of man fails to fathom the sublimity of some portions of its revelation. It cannot justly be rejected if its teachings do not square with some views of natural science, a subject which it does not profess to teach; for, the Bible is a rule of religious, but not of scientific faith and practice. Poetry is not prose, nor are apocalyptic writings records of history whether contained in secular or sacred literature; and to read and interpret them as such is to show either the reader's prejudice or ignorance. Any effort made to treat a book after such a fashion could result only in the distortion of its contents, and the confusion of the reader. A few illustrations will serve to show how these methods work when applied to the Bible. Take for example the much controverted words in Joshua 10: 13, "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed." The view that the entire passage is a poetical quotation from the book of Jasher which was a book containing accounts of wars and war poems, or songs, is gradually growing into general acceptance by Christian scholars as eminent for their piety as for their scholarship. There is no necessity for doubting that a miracle was wrought for Joshua, but neither is there any for interpreting literally a poetic description of it. The Hebrew poets also wrote in Scripture, Ps. 114: 3–6;

Judges 5:20, that "the hills and mountains skipped, and the waters fled, and the trees of the fields clapped their hands," and "the stars in their courses fought." But anyone who fails to brush aside the poetic mist surrounding these truths shall in interpreting them do great violence to the literature. To show an instance of such folly in secular literature a recent writer selected a poetic sentence from one of the speeches of a blatant infidel who criticised the Bible for its meaningless and extravagant utterances. In doing so he said, "Think of that wonderful chemistry by which bread was changed into the divine tragedy of Hamlet." The writer pointed out the poetic figure contained in the statement, and showed that were it treated as an historic fact, we should have to believe the speaker meant that by the combination of certain chemical elements in the chemist's retort this marvellous production of Hamlet was created. But he himself would be the first to resent such an absurd interpretation of the infidel's own words. And all such attempts only pervert teaching whether that of the Bible, or of a secular book by reading into, and extracting from them what they cannot possibly mean. Unless the contents of a book are considered fairly, they cannot possibly be understood clearly, or appreciated fully; therefore, it is not to be wondered at when many of the critics reject the Bible.

Another illustration may serve to show further how these misconceptions arise, and for which the writers of the Bible are blamed. The word "firmament" contained in the first chapter of Genesis is constantly put forth as a "mistake of Moses," and even some scien-

tists(?) have quoted it as a proof of the disagreement between the Bible and science. Now, a mere smattering of education is sufficient to teach us that the word is a Latinized word which does not adequately represent the meaning of the Hebrew, and as I heard a speaker wittily say, "We are sure it is a word Moses never heard." It means "something solid," whereas the original word means "a vapory expanse." Then, there is the word rendered "whales" of which so much has been made as evidence of the blundering(?) manner of Moses, and of which even the late Prof. Huxley made fun. But the word in the original language in which the Bible was written means "great sea monsters," and exactly describes the monstrous creatures of the deep at the time referred to, and makes manifest to the unprejudiced reader that the translators, and not Moses, should be held responsible for such inaccuracies as may exist in these instances. Moreover, even its teachings concerning the creation when approached without preconceptions are found to be more in harmony than in discord with the teachings of matured science on this important question. However, if the Bible narrative is read through the fog of prejudice arising from the morass of the belief that the Bible declares God made the world out of nothing in the space of six days of twenty-four hours, there shall probably exist in the reader's mind an irreconcilable difference between the records of Scripture and the facts of science. On the other hand, if we read Genesis believing the fallacy that science has decided that its undisputable facts are opposed to the teachings of Genesis re-

garding the creation of this world, we shall remain color-blind before their harmonies.

The truth is the Bible does not say, "God created the world out of nothing, in the space of six days of twenty-four hours." The Bible does not mention "days" at all, but says that, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1: 1. As to the length of a "day" the Bible says, "one 'day' is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Ps. 90: 4, 2nd Pet. 3: 8. Nor do many, and much less all, of the leading authorities in science say, "There is an irreconcilable difference between science and the Bible in their teachings of the world's creation," but quite the reverse. In the year 1887 over one hundred of the leading scientists in Britain and America prepared, signed, published, and circulated a declaration denying the statement previously made by some irresponsible sceptics that "There is an irreconcilable conflict between matured science and the Bible." And with all respect to the learning of the laity these are the authorities who ought to know a little more about matured science if not also the Bible, than either a merchant versed in dry goods and groceries, or a lawyer learned in law, and dazzling with the exuberance of his eloquence, or a theologian equipped in theology, and full of dry-as-dust technicalities. It will be a new birth for truth when Bible critics rightfully distinguish between a poor science spoken by a smatterer, and matured science taught by its unprejudiced and capable masters.

With these considerations before us let us hear now the teachings of God's two greatest books—the Bible

and nature—concerning some facts of the creation, as interpreted by the most capable human authorities.

The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Geology tells us, its "history plainly reveals a *beginning*." It traces back the origin of the animals and plants through successive ages to their primitive and ancient state. It even assigns to their beginnings in history all the rocks of the earth's crust, and all the plains, and the mountains built up from them! Therefore, the criticism of science on this point accords with the record of Scripture.

The Bible reads, "The earth was without form and void." That means a world entirely destitute of any order, life, growth, or beauty, as Sir Wm. Dawson describes it, "a vaporous mass whirling in its rounds."

Geology says, when the world was "in its formless state, there was the airy cloud mist, a watery mass, and a bright sphere around it. Then the congealing of a solid crust began, and the dropping of acid, and watery showers." Thus in the statement of these conditions "in the beginning," geology and the Bible agree.

The Bible says, "Darkness was upon the face of the deep," and "God said, let there be light and there was light."

Science says, "The voidless vaporous mass came into being—*i. e.*, took form, or shape,—the mass condensed and a new brilliancy burst forth from the shiny cloud mist, and there was light, though not sunlight." Ingersol has beautifully and profitably sung his falsehood soaked in sarcasm, of the grass growing, and the flowers

blooming "without the sunlight," in order to make the creation story of the Bible ridiculous, and Goldwin Smith has prosaically repeated the fabrication. But science as quoted above reveals light as existing before the sun shone. The writer in the book of Genesis says, "Let the waters be gathered together into one place."

And science says "There occurred vast sunken areas into which the waters subsided, and the earth's pent up fires belched forth ashes and molten rocks." So according to the Bible and science thus arose the first dry land, and as the poet sings, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

Indeed the only valid objection raised by science to the Scripture record of Creation is, that vegetable life appeared on the earth a whole period before animals. But even that objection has been greatly weakened, if not satisfactorily removed, to reasonable critics. For, while no ancient fossil of vegetation previous to animal life has been discovered, still, the geologist cannot safely deny its prior existence. And Sir Wm. Logan, and other eminent geologists have made discoveries establishing at least the probability on scientific grounds that land plants may have reached farther back than animal life, and on this point also science and Moses would seem to agree.[1]

In considering the Bible story of the origin of man in the face of the objections to it made by the modern wranglers, we would do well to note that the Bible does not elaborate the processes of creation. However, the

[1] See Dawson's Story of the Earth, Chapter I, and his introduction to Modern Science in Bible Lands.

writer uses language sufficiently exact to show that God is the creator of the highest forms of life. He selects the word "create" to express the most original kind of creation, so that, if the processes of creation were those of evolution, we have a God-evolved, and not a self-evolved world. He created the seed, out of which grew the fruit; He established the germ out of which evolved the universe, and these were the processes observed in man's creation. "In the beginning God *created*"; and when He brought man into being He "created." "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Gen. 1:27. But the writer uses the less emphatic word "made" when he speaks of the lower forms of animate life. It may be that the word "made" suggests the production of some forms of life as an easier process after creation began. However that may be, two things seem clear in the case of man as narrated in Scripture, viz.: the cause of his creation was a creative Will, and the mode of the development of man in the progress of the Creator's plan was through secondary agents or causes. For example, there are the dust of the ground, the atmosphere, the waters and all things in the land tributary to his development, and also natural laws in their operations; and it seems as if all are recognized as agents or means by this ancient writer in Genesis. And what has science to say on this matter? Even Darwin and the most godless evolutionists acknowledge that man is of the dust; so there is no controversy on that point. And as to the origin of man's spiritual and moral nature—his Godlikeness—the late Prof. Huxley in his "Critiques and Addresses," says,

"The truth that life comes from life," or, as believers call it, "a creative will," "is victorious along the whole line." "Though," he adds rather significantly, "I wish it were all the other way." Therefore, he in substance unites, in this important matter of the origin of man, his voice with those of other eminent leaders in science, such as Agassiz, Carpenter, Beale, Guyot, Herschel, Lord Kelvin, Dawson, Dana, Logan, and a host of others, who say with Moses, "In the beginning God created life"; and, "God created man" in His own image. Might we not with profit repeat the question still unanswered, "How this ancient writer hit it so well in this simple statement of scientific principles if he were not inspired?" For myriads of the ablest men in the succeeding centuries have been lost in hopeless confusion in attempting to explain or refute these facts.

All Bible readers know the story of the flood and have heard something of the adverse criticism to which it has been subjected. Many are still somewhat disposed to believe that its waters have been dried up, and the narrative wiped out by the artillery of the critics. Some have said with more regard to childish humor than common sense that, "it must have rained *many years* to cause such a flood; and the waters must have been *five miles* deep in order to cover Mt. Ararat." But such criticism shows how fast and loose even a critic may play with Scripture. Once more should we remember this narrative contains more poetry than prose, and great care should be exercised in finding its true meaning. Ararat means a highland region, and not the solitary mountain peak 17,000 feet high, called by that name, as some

have supposed, and it does not require any scholarship to permit the statement that a truer rendering than that given of the passage in Gen. 8:4 is, "The ark does rest . . . on the mountains of Ararat." Every circumstance of the narrative seems to indicate that the flood was local and not universal in its extent. In the 7th ch. and 20th verse we read that "Fifteen cubits high did the waters prevail." Any reader will admit there is a vast difference between the "fifteen cubits" which measure 22½ feet, and the "five miles" set forth in the outlandish guess of the critic. When the writer speaks of "the whole heavens," and, "all the high hills," he must have meant just what he saw of them, and not the highest tops of the Armenian range. Just as when in the book of Job we read of "the lightning flash over the whole heaven," we know it does not mean that the lightning made a circuit round the whole world, but that the flash was very vivid and great as far as it could be seen. As a consequence of the comparatively narrow limits of the flood the different species of beasts and birds to be taken into the ark would be less numerous than commonly imagined by the distressed critic. As the narrative is thus interpreted the difficulty of having a series of miracles contained in a miraculous flood is entirely overcome, and the whole story appears real in the light of "sweet reasonableness." We are now ready to listen to the description given by science of the story of the flood.

Geology says, "Deposits reveal that all the countries between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, and between the great interior mountain chains of Europe,

Africa, and Asia must have been submerged at that early period." And Sir William Dawson adds, "Were we bound to explain this submergence by natural causes these would not be hard to find," and many leading geologists agree with him. So that even in this, science does not oppose the Bible. Moreover, when the details connected with the construction of the ark are carefully considered, the objections raised to the inadequate ventilation and insufficient sanitation in the ark become manifestly more fanciful than formidable. The word translated "window" in Gen. ch. 8: 4 is properly "hole," and is not the same as that translated "window" in the 6th ch. and 16th verse. The one was a small aperture in the larger window which comprised the side of the ark, of which "holes" there were doubtless many for sanitary purposes. And so we might continue showing how the teachings of the best scientists, and those of Scripture, when fairly interpreted, do not, in any important material, contradict each other, though often their human interpreters make them appear to do so.

The textual criticisms made upon the Bible, to a few only of which I shall refer, are of a different nature than those already referred to in the present chapter. Textual criticism in general deals with the originals of the sacred text, and is a science of the greatest value in obtaining a proper knowledge of the sacred Scriptures. It enables students of the Word of God to discover the very words and expressions which the inspired penmen wrote or dictated to their amanuenses. But, "all are not Israel who are of Israel"; and all are not textual

critics who profess to be. It is a common occurrence in this age for men who are wholly unqualified for such work either by disposition or attainments to don the critic's armor and rush at the Scriptures with the sole aim of eliminating the supernatural from the Bible. These are known by their application to the text of the Bible of tests not in harmony with the well known rules of literary criticism, by ignoring legitimate external evidence, and by forming conclusions after a partial examination of the record. They too have frequently blamed the original writers for the errors of translators, and have discussed the poetic in Scripture expressed in metaphor as if it were sober prose, thereby confusing the meaning, and application of the truth, making the true appear false, and the spiritual and eternal seem only the human and temporary. It is unfortunate that the term "higher criticism" has of late years been given to textual criticism; for it is applied to all criticism whether helpful or injurious. Much invaluable work has been accomplished by legitimate criticism in the way of making clear obscure passages of Scripture, improving defective translations, and correcting views formed from misinterpreted, and interpolated texts. Therefore, a strong line should be drawn between the several classes of critics. The destructive critics inform us with a candor worthy to adorn truth, that "fresh discoveries of this age have outgrown the belief in the inspiration of the Bible." Now what are these "fresh discoveries"? Some of them are *six hundred* years old. Eben Ezra, a Jew in the 12th century, raised some of these objections put forth as "fresh discover-

ies." Carlstadt, a contemporary of Luther, followed in his line. Hobbs, the English sceptic in the 17th century, became famous by propagating these "fresh discoveries." One hundred and fifty years ago Jean Astruc, a Frenchman and Roman Catholic, formulated a theory out of what "fresh discoveries" others had made, known as the "Documentary hypothesis." And over a hundred years ago Benedict De Spinoza openly denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. These are some of the "fresh discoveries" which German, British, and American destructive Biblical critics have been improving(?) upon and restating to a reading public; though, we are told they came through the fresh light recently thrown on Biblical research. This is where Ingersol discovered many of his "Mistakes of Moses"; though he assures the world they were revealed to him by "the light of this age." Indeed, leading reviews are still paying high prices for a rehash of these "fresh discoveries" against the Bible to some destructive critics who are wholly unqualified by either habit of life or temper for the work of textual criticism. Even such a writer as Goldwin Smith only last January served up this stale stuff for the American palate in the North American Review. The fact that Ingersol had uttered the same to comic crowds in the West ten years ago, and that others had published it sixty years before, and others taught it as "fresh discoveries" centuries ago, did not seem to make much difference even to the learned ex-professor.

The account of the creation of man as given in the 2nd chapter of Genesis is one of the portions of Scrip-

ture against which those critics have directed their fire. They allege it contradicts the story of man's creation as set forth in the first chapter. Whereas, it seems evident that the difference is largely confined to the narration of all the facts. In the first chapter we read, "God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him," and in the second we learn, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." It would seem very difficult to find any contradiction in these two statements; though the second appears to be supplementary to the first. In this way the two narratives contain a complete account of man's origin, as also whence he came, and the means used in his formation. "God created" him, "God formed him from the dust," and "God breathed upon him." Is it not a scientific fact that man's body is composed of so many chemical elements, all of which may be found in the red earth, which the Scriptures call "dust"? Is it not also indisputable that there is more in the constitution of any man than mud? And believers of all classes and creeds call that "more" the germ of man's moral might and spiritual grandeur—a reflection of the image of God.

Another ancient foe dressed up in modern garb by the destructive critics of the Bible is a statement concerning the enormous growth necessary among the Israelites in Egypt in order to give them the 600,000 fighting men claimed for them at that time by Scripture. Indeed, they add, "this growth as mentioned in Exodus is simply impossible." It happens however, that the

Bible itself says, "they sojourned in Egypt *four hundred and thirty* years"; though these critics insist that it says "two hundred and fifteen years." Bearing in mind the true time as specified by Scripture the difficulty almost entirely vanishes, especially in the face of the fact that the servants with their families who went down to Egypt with Jacob became part of their tribes, and the male portion of them were numbered as part of the army. A fierce critic once said in his wrath, "God hates a critic the worst of all authors." But if it is the style of such to first make a parrot of Scripture, and then use his own words to falsify sacred truth, both God and man should repudiate him.

Other statements of the Bible such as Baalam's ass speaking, Jonah and the whale, the raising of Lazarus, are disposed of as erroneous with one stroke of the pen simply because they set forth the miraculous. It is true the miraculous is abundantly revealed in the Scriptures, and it is the prerogative of anyone to dismiss it with either a sneer or a denial. It would, however, only seem reasonable for such to first settle the prior question, "Does the supernatural exist anywhere?" The supernatural is the miraculous, or only that which is above nature, and need not be against it. It may interfere temporarily with the ordinary operation of natural law, or it may prove to be only a work of that law beyond human knowledge. However, if it is the supernatural it may be either above, or beyond, or opposed to natural, but it must be entirely independent of it.

Darwin in his "Origin of Species," p. 422, admits the supernatural in creation as related in the Bible. He

says, "It is as noble a conception of the Deity to believe He created a few original forms with capabilities of development into other and needful forms, as to believe the different species were the results of fresh created orders." The creation of those "few created forms" we call the miraculous, or supernatural.

Tyndall admitted the existence of a chasm in this world between physical facts and human consciousness which is "intellectually impassable." That chasm is beyond reason, though there is no evidence it is against it, and we believers call it the supernatural, the miraculous.

Huxley said, "I decline to admit that I am only the cunningest of nature's clocks"; meaning thereby that he was something more than a piece of machinery which can be put up by hand and explained by human intelligence. And that inexplicable part in him, that mysterious thing in every life which is so much beyond, above, and independent of the natural, and indeed may sometimes operate against it, we call the supernatural, the miraculous.

Once admit this, as even these eminent scientific agnostics did, and this universe becomes a demonstrated miracle. And that miracle Worker who was the embodiment of the supernatural on earth, might surely call back to life the centurion's daughter, or the dead Lazarus; feed the hungry thousands in the wilderness, or on the barren Judean hills; make an ass speak, or preserve Jonah in the whale if needful so to do; give Himself in love unto death for sinful man, and rise victorious from a sin-cursed grave for a lost world. And neither arts nor ingenuities can accomplish the over-

throw of the logic of these facts; and the sneers and jeers of infidelity shall continue to prove powerless against the faith in them.

About the only "fresh discovery" set forth in Goldwin Smith's article is that "the Bible does not put forward any claim to inspiration." A story is told of a spiritualist in a seance who revealed a strange old lady to a country youth with the brief introduction, "Sir, this is your mother." The young man had left his mother home alive and well, and was struck almost dumb with astonishment. After a brief pause he replied rather crestfallen, "Well that is a poser." When first I read the statement that "the Bible in its text made no claim to inspiration," I could only say in the words of the young man to the spiritualist "Well that is a poser from Goldwin Smith." It must surely be of interest to know that this Bible makes direct claims to inspiration no fewer than two hundred times by saying, "thus saith the Lord," or, "the Lord spake." Our truth-speaking Lord Jesus constantly treated them as inspired, and the apostles also set forth this exceptional claim and character for them. Indeed, one of them in the epistle to the Hebrews states, "God had set His own stamp upon the book, and owned it as His, by 'swearing with His own oath—and He can swear by no greater'—that 'His promises' in this Word, 'shall come to pass.'"

Which are truth seekers to believe—those Scriptures which speak for themselves, or critics whose principal aim seems the destruction of the truth, by weapons of fancy, folly, and falsehood?

CHAPTER IX.

THE BIBLE VERSUS ITS CRITICS (Continued.)

(*a*) The critics of its moral teachings.
(*b*) The critics of its social teachings.

"Hath the rain a father"? Job.

There are many difficulties connected with the teachings of Scripture; and yet one is tempted to wonder why their existence should occasion any surprise. Many of the facts revealed in nature—that other book of God—are not fully understood by any, and not even generally known to the few, but little surprise is manifested, and no one discards the lessons of science which is nature's great interpreter, because of that. If we stop to think how little exact knowledge exists concerning light, life, and law, which are the three principal forces in nature; or how much less is clearly understood of the relation of their constituent elements to each other, or of the relation of the several laws to each and all; we shall conclude that it is somewhat unreasonable to charge the Bible with all mystery, and very inconsistent to reject it, and believe in nature. Intellectual difficulties! yes, all nature is surcharged with them. But we do not ask, Why is this universe not made so that all can easily comprehend it in its mysterious composition and various and intricate relationships? and then doubt its reality or existence.

It is well we should be mindful of man's privilege as an intelligent being who gains knowledge only by observation and the application of his faculties, and that the royal prize of his mental activities is not merely a knowledge of existing facts, but the culture of the man. It thus becomes apparently reasonable that intellectual difficulties whether in the Bible or in nature may be an indispensable means to man's own greatness. Moral difficulties in God's Word may have the same effect on character that intellectual ones have on the cultivation of the mind. We certainly cannot overcome by study the unrevealed moral purposes of God, any more than we can understand the undefined motives of man; but we can be humble, prayerful and patient before them, and thereby secure improvement in character.

But what is meant by moral difficulties in the teachings of Scripture? Usually the meaning given is very broad, but we seek in this chapter to confine ourselves to a few of those representative instances in Scripture in which God's dealings with His people, the revelations of His character, and the judgment of an enlightened Christian conscience appear to enter into conflict. An infidel mountebank playing at so much per head opens the Bible in the presence of his audience and reads certain sentences, and then dramatically closes the book with the supercilious remark, "I cannot proceed further lest I should shock the decency of the people by reading more," and the licentious ones present applaud him, and consider him a moral paragon. A Christian conscience strives after education even up to the highest standards of justice, mercy and truth; and must treat

even apparently distorted truth by these standards. And the difference between the attitudes to truth of these two classes accounts largely for the flippant profanity of the one, and the reverent diligence of the other in considering this question. There are a few instances recorded of immoral doings contained in Scripture, such as the imprecations of many of the prophets, and in some of the Psalms; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the destruction of the enemies of Israel by the divine command. But they only exhibit the sinful personal experiences of some of those who lived in those days, the severe discipline necessary to maintain morality, and reveal to us the human side of divine revelation. The lesson taught by those instances is not "that we may do likewise," but rather "let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." For example, there are books in medical science which treat of "obstetrics," but they are for the purpose of giving information concerning the better treatment of specific diseases. No one would read them to a promiscuous audience, nor would any charge them with "teaching immorality," and class them with immoral books, for they are written for the welfare of the human race. And in like manner the Bible relates the moral diseases of humanity, with which some of its writers were afflicted in a marked degree, and the manner in which sin was often punished in those days, that the coming ages might learn how to flee from, fight against and remove them, as they are immeasurably more terrible than either physical or mental disorders. Even the severe punishments of God inflicted by His commands

on some people and nations should be read in the light of the barbarous conditions in which they lived, and the daily commission by them of the most outrageous crimes. The innocent sometimes suffered with the guilty, but the saving of a purer seed, and the elevation of the nation in the future was the holy purpose which ever prompted such regrettable actions. Indeed, though the critic to-day stands on his pinnacle of a loftier moral superiority, and sneers with repugnance against the barbarities of Old Testament times, the highest interests of the human race demanded that the atrocious idolatry of these heathen nations be rooted out somewhere. Had the Israelites not accomplished it, they would have extinguished the Israelites; and where would the superior moral plane of our age have been to-day? It is easy for us to look at these things through the reforms, the literature, and moral and spiritual forces which have come and gone since then, and forget that theirs was the heavy task of laying moral foundations. But take as an illustration of the eastern ferocity which those had to overthrow, the modern Turk; and add to that the revolting rites of Canaanitish paganism, and we have, on a small scale, a sample of the character of the nations these Israelites had to contend against. Who doubts that if Turkey had her will the Armenians would be exterminated? Where is the man with any clearly defined sense of the right, and true, and pure who would not rejoice if some power impelled by a divine sense of the sacredness of justice and mercy should arise and slaughter the atrocious Turks wholesale. History reveals that those Turkish atrocities have been repeated

for several generations, and there is no reasonable doubt they will be continued so long as Turkey is a nation, and Mohammed is their prophet. The use of the exterminating sword is therefore greatly, if not entirely, justified as we meditate upon these considerations, for in such desperate cases fire requires to be fought with fire. Moreover, the Israelites themselves required these severe lessons. It was of paramount importance they should be taught that contagion with idolatry brings physical corruption, and moral and national decay. Indeed, idolatry had several times so engrafted itself upon the body politic that those Jewish people who associated with it were threatened with death. "Defile not yourselves in any of these things," said the Lord to those people. "For, in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you, and the land is defiled; therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants. For whosoever shall do any of these abominations even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people." "I am Jehovah your God." The nation, Israel, had a moral character, and was weighted with responsibility to its God, just as truly as an individual, and its prophets and leaders required to become ministers of justice as well as teachers and rulers of the people, in order that integrity might be preserved. In brief, what was done in most cases was to save the nation's character by severely and sometimes cruelly punishing its enemies. Even in those rude days the motto was—though rigidly and roughly practiced—"Better the whole nation perish than that right, and truth, and God

should be dethroned." And when the monstrosities were exterminated, these Israelites became a purer and better stock; just as life is sometimes saved by the amputation of a limb.

We live in a different age now, and shame on us if we do not reveal a different spirit and practice milder reformatory methods. But are not the barbarities and ferocity of modern wars revolting? Do they in some features differ so very much from those our Biblical critics condemn? And every day we meet with those who cannot be mellowed by a sympathetic tear, or restrained from evil by quantities of the milk of human kindness, or drawn to righteousness and purity by the cords of love. And the rod, the penitentiary, the halter, or the electric chair are substituted for the cruder methods adopted by our Hebrew forefathers, to save modern society and the nation from such people. So that the judgments of God are still abroad in the land, though the methods are altered by civilization, and are adapted to our present age.

But it is often argued that the conceptions revealed in the worship of its people are immoral, and the human sacrifices in the Old Testament are cited to prove the contention. We shall consider the case of Isaac offered as a sacrifice by his father, Abraham, as sufficient for all similar instances in Scripture. Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter needs not to be defended; because it is doubtful whether it consisted of anything more than her celibacy.

It has been earnestly urged that it would be a crime for a father to slay his innocent son as a sacrifice, and

to question this is to attempt to shake the foundations of morality. But there does not seem any such desire on the part of Abraham the father of God's faithful. Every step he took in that awful journey seems as if taken on leaden feet, and only under the impelling and painful sense of duty. He had no Bible declaring to him the revealed will of God; but as his conscience spoke to him, he believed he heard "the Voice" which had been the guide of his life, and which had never misled him. As is not infrequent in Scripture, the meaning of the whole narrative is greatly obscured by the rendering of the word "tempt." The word means to try, prove, test. The revisers therefore rightly translated the verse, "God did prove Abraham." He pursued his course even to the verge of the awful; though evidently not without faith that He in whom he believed would "provide a ram for the sacrifice." This provision God made in ample time to deliver His faithful servant. The charge of the critics that Jehovah ordered human sacrifices to be made to Him becomes groundless, for God overruled the mistake of Abraham, by using it as a proof of his faith and obedience, and the trusty patriarch stood the test, the Lord provided a sacrifice, and Abraham has come down through the ages enriching and beautifying them with the moral splendor of his character, and the triumphs of his submission; and he stands to-day easily the first on the list of the heroes of faith. Indeed, instead of this instance encouraging the revolting practice of human sacrifice it surely discourages it by rendering such wholly unnecessary, and revealing God's antipathy to it. The Lord

provided the ram, and showed that animal and not human sacrifice was commendable; and He revealed that when the human life is offered up to Him He redeems, but does not slay it. Nor did God require to prove Abraham that he might learn what was in Him, or to know the extent of his willingness to suffer for Him; but that Abraham's faith might be perfected, and many seeing and hearing of it should believe on His name. The mightiest faith is the fruit of the greatest trial; and there is nothing so enthusing and uplifting as illustrious example. And the spiritual pathway of human life has been to myriads illumined as by a noontide sun by Abraham's submissive trust.

As to the law of sacrifice, we should learn that its original purpose was to teach those primitive Israelites true ideas of justice, mercy, and love; and the way of moral transformation by self-denial through vicarious sacrifice or suffering. At first it was revealed in the form of a fine imposed upon the guilty which led to penitence and self-restraint. It taught them that God hated sin, and that He would in nowise excuse, though He would for a time tolerate the guilty; and that knowledge gradually improved their life. It is true these were types of the great ante-type Christ Jesus who made atonement for the world's sin, and which reveals human life redeemed through sacrifice and repentance, and the higher life secured both in nature and in grace though it is doubtful whether those people understood this underlying truth. In all these the world has had visible and tangible tokens of the terrible consequences of sin, the value of a pure life, and the all-redeeming mercy of

their God: but in no line in Scripture is there taught human sacrifice for selfish or personal purposes.

Another instance adduced to show the immoral conception of Old Testament religion is that "David is called a man after God's own heart," while in fact he is shown to have been a very depraved character. The critics should remember that the prophet spake the words concerning David when a youth. Saul's career had been a tragic failure simply on account of his sin. David when chosen king was distinguished for virtue and valor in the highest degree, though even then he was not a faultless human model. But his youthful character possessing so many notable qualities such as God delights to see, when compared with the morally dwarfish and warped characters of that age, surely justified the saintly eulogium passed by the judge. It is almost unnecessary to mention that he afterwards grew giddy on the heights of prosperity's luxury, and fell into the grossest sins, which show that for a time at least the devil of lust controlled him. But where can be found repentance which in quality and quantity excels his? No man was ever more severe in passing sentence upon himself, as may be easily believed by reading the fifty-first Psalm. As we read that record of his deep self-abasement and confession; his earnest prayer for pardon, and purity; we need not fear to once more apply to him the words which honor his youthful years, "A man after God's own heart." For as Carlyle said, "The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none, and of all acts, is not repentance for any man the most divine?"

We come now to notice very briefly some criticisms upon the sociology, or the social relations and social ethics set forth in the Bible.

It is charged that the Bible teaches polygamy and slavery, the inequality of humanity, and the disability of the female sex. And the conclusion drawn is, it is the foe of social purity, liberty, and equality. While it is true these evils existed, and were for a long time practiced among the Hebrews, yet it is grossly false to say that polygamy was ever taught in the Hebrew Scriptures. Our Savior Jesus informs us that "it was permitted because of the hardness of their hearts," so that it existed on sufferance because of the low moral condition of the people. The Edenic idea of marriage set forth in the book of Genesis is the divine one which runs through all Scripture, viz., "The twain shall be one flesh, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife." It would be as reasonable for the coming generations to say that the Christian religion teaches the ideas on divorce now prevailing in some nominally Christian nations, who, in practice, are anti-Christian on this all-important question. Nor are the criticisms on this subject always adorned with the jewel of consistency, for in the same breath the critics blame the Bible for teaching polygamy, and also inform us these people sprang from brutes and nothing better should be expected from them. Fortunately for the human race, as also for the pure and undefiled religion of the Bible, the truth is contained in neither. The Hebrews fell into the immoral social habits of the heathen nations around them, and until they were educated and

uplifted into the pure ideals of marriage and domestic life originally taught in Scripture, they practiced them. However, the idea of marriage between one man and one woman being a sacred union of two hearts and two lives in love, until either adultery or death separate them, was first set forth in the Bible, and has been evolved and gradually enforced by its teachers as it was practicable so to do, until it regained its original position before the advent of Jesus Christ.

It is also alleged that the Bible accords to woman an inferior position in the home and in society. One critic has often stated, "There is not one word in the Bible about woman excepting words of shame and humiliation." Of course, in his relentless zeal to make a point against religion he overlooked the trifling references of titular dignity, prominent position, and opportunity for the exercise of exceptional ability made to Miriam the prophetess; to Deborah the ruler; to Naomi the patriot; to Ruth the faithful; to Esther, the ancient Joan of Arc; to the Shunamite protectress; to Hannah the mother of Samuel; and to Elizabeth and Mary, and a host of others from mother Eve to Priscilla, who were the heroines of those eastern people, the unsurpassed saviors and benefactors of their nation and church, around whose memories there shines a sacred halo of honor, love, and glory unbedimmed.

Much has also been made of the apostle's statement that, "Wives should submit themselves unto their husbands as unto the Lord for it is right." But no word is uttered concerning his similar regulation to husbands in which he advises "husbands" to "love their wives as

Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." Surely here is enjoined a love which courts submission, and renders obedience easy; a love which recognizes the truest equality, and makes sacrifice for each other delightful; the love which is the bond recognized by Scripture, as that which alone constitutes true marriage which heaven registers and makes its own. Nor is Paul's injunction that "women should remain silent in the churches," any proof of the humiliation or disability of the female sex. The rules of Scriptural exegesis require no more than a local application of the passage containing the prohibition, and it may mean no more than that some of these Corinthian women were to observe silence and meditation in the future, as a punishment for some former unseemly or unprofitable utterances, which were not unknown in the church in those days.

Even though slavery was universal in the ancient world, the Mosaic religion showed its superiority over others, by revealing the right of every man to personal freedom, and by attempts at least to regulate the evil. The ceremonial laws contained many ameliorations which had to be observed by the slaveholder on pain of punishment. "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren or of the strangers in the land."

In the New Testament Scriptures the basis of liberty, fraternity, and equality of race and opportunity is laid in these words, "God hath made of one blood all nations." "God hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." And Christ said, "He

that doeth the will of my Father the same is my mother, sister and brother." Moreover, when Paul says, "Servants obey your masters in singleness of heart as unto Christ," he also says, "Masters do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your master is in heaven, neither is there any respect of persons with him." It is thus he shows all relationships of life are equalized in right doing, all liberty is limited by the rights of others; otherwise they become, no matter what position on life's stage the actors occupy, cruel tyranny and intoxicated license. The God of this Bible teaches that all are equal before Him, and all free who live for Him, and shall at last be valued by Him according to their relation to the eternal principles of justice and mercy, though in all ages man has perverted God's ways, distorted His Word, and prostituted His purposes. Like the old lady who on one occasion looked into her mirror, and beholding several wrinkles on her face, formerly unseen by her, threw her hair brush and smashed the glass saying, "That old mirror makes me look awful." So many see in God's Word their moral deformities reflected, and as they behold them, cast the book from them as untrue. But the lady's wrinkles were not removed by her rash act, nor are sinful features eliminated from character and the world redeemed by rejecting God's Word, notwithstanding the many difficulties suggested by its contents. If it be read with an appreciative mind, and often upon our knees, instead of hero-wise, and warrior-like, with souls proud and minds arrogant; if one strives to put one's self in the writer's place; to distinguish the human history recorded in it

from the divine revelation which it contains; to interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New, for the principles of the sermon on the Mount were established by Moses though developed by our Lord Jesus Christ; one shall find in it the language of God to the human soul that can guide it upward to Himself, transform it into the likeness of Himself, make the Bible the book of books upon which the human race may lean for salvation, and in whose undying moral and religious principles it shall find immortality, eternal life.

The one thing in life which God's children need never fear is, that His Word shall be overthrown, for Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

> "All flesh is as grass,
> And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass.
> The grass withereth, the flower fadeth;
> But the word of the Lord abideth forever."

As the seas have for ages swept over the rocky headland, and left it only whiter and nobler, frowning grimly at such misspent energy; so, this Bible has been attacked for centuries by the learning of critics, swept by the philosopy of sceptics, and lashed by the fury of infidels, but it still remains the Rock of eternal truth, the very Word of the living God more brightly prominent, and more clearly seen, while ever and anon its foes sink back into their own dark and damning depths.

As the birds carry seeds and unconsciously implant them, which in after years become forests of beautiful shrubbery, and giant trees producing and protecting growth and life; so the seeds of divine truth in the Bible

are being implanted everywhere, and their fruits are growing wide as the universe, endless as eternity, and "for the healing of the nations." So let believers "fear not, faint not, falter not." "The word of the Lord standeth sure."

CHAPTER X.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE TO US.

"Thy testimonies are wonderful." David.

"The engrafted word which is able to save your soul." James.

In discussing this question it is not my purpose to set forth any particular theory of inspiration, but to advance some of the principal claims of the Bible as a divinely inspired book, and leave the responsibility of deciding with my hearers.

I desire, however, to define the doctrine of inspiration in which we believe.

Inspiration is that divine assistance necessary to reveal spiritual things of which the writers of Scripture were ignorant; to stimulate them in recalling facts essential to be remembered of what they had learned; and to guide them in imparting to others the knowledge of these truths which they possessed. Thus they were enabled to write accurately, and speak truly, these divine and human truths contained in the Bible.

Inspiration is principally revealed by the divine truth it reveals to others, the true it creates in others, and the inspiration it gives to others. Therefore in determining what is this book to me? I do so by finding out whether its literature, its art, its morality, and its religion tower above all other religions, morals, art, and literature, and inspire me with the divine affiatus which

can bring forth in me the image of the divine man Christ Jesus.

First. What is its literature? All literature is both the creator and creature of circumstances. But its greatness is determined by what it receives from, and does for, the period which produced it, and for the unborn future. Whether poetry or prose, literature is judged by this canon. Carlyle's "Frederick the Great" made him famous because of the new creations which he produced from the circumstances which surrounded the life of the great German Monarch. Tennyson's "In Memoriam" shall live in the future ages for the beautiful monuments in it he raised to the sacred memories of the past, out of an incident so common. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" shall control hearts for the vivid pictures it portrays out of the blood and struggle of a universal Christian experience. Shakespeare and Burns shall continue to be sung and acted, whatever preachers may say, because of their creations of characters sublime, from circumstances so ordinary. It is true something depends upon the style of diction, as to the value of literature. But the lasting element in it is the creative thought; and the genius or the inspiration is seen in the greatness of the creation, and the inferiority of the circumstances from which it sprung. Now, it is not an uncommon occurrence to hear men—and especially young men—who, if they have read it, cannot have thought much about it, say: "The Bible is not ranked as a literary book by the thinkers of this age." It is said Ingersoll claims to be the only infidel who has read the Bible through; and it would appear from

this estimate of its literature by many that his statement is true. I would, therefore, suggest that those who undervalue its literature read it carefully, for a little thought will reveal the folly of such a judgment. Its creations produced—mark you—not in this nineteenth century, but in nature's primal morn, eclipse the sublimest thought of successive ages.

Take for example the history of creation, brief, rugged, and poetic, in the first chapter of Genesis. Here in a few sentences is a living drama whose interest is ever deepening, and extending with the expanding thought of the centuries.

"In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth." "Let there be light and there was light." "He made the stars also." So real and so lifelike are these words that the formless deep has been felt since, and the surging of the broodings of the Spirit has been heard rolling since. Whether the narrative is science or not is not our question at present. But it seems settled, that the contrasts of creative thought (out of such barren circumstances) which swell not only through this sacred page, but through the world of thought to-day shall live and grow, illumine and fill the minds of men, when the scientific treatises of Humbolt, and Darwin, and Huxley as such, shall forever be forgotten. A famous infidel once said this account described astronomy in these five words, "He made the stars also." Now that is an unpardonable mistake for a thinker to make, who has been so well paid for showing supposed mistakes of others. Moses did not try to describe astronomy in these words. But he suggested the

starry heavens to observant man, and the creative thought contained in these five words has set astronomers to systematize the heavens, and to reveal to man the grandeur, the greatness and the glory of the world of stars. And when anyone, whether infidel or believer, by five burning words can create such an offspring of genius, and reveal such vistas of thought as this writer has done it will be worth more than five dollars a night to hear him.

Take also the story of the deluge, and that of the giving of the sacred oracles of God on Mt. Sinai's peak. The story of a flood is found in all nations, but ludicrous images, and incongruous circumstances mar its sublimity, while on the lips of the man Moses what mental creations are produced! His language is bare and sterile in its simplicity. But as he calmly says, "the windows of heaven being opened," what a sight is revealed to the mind's eye. The torrent of destruction rushes forth, the sun retires from the sight, and the surgings of the billows are heard to mingle with the struggles of the dying, as the thoughtful listen. And there is left indelibly impressed upon the mind the awful scene of an assemblage of horrors. That single truth of the flood became in the hearts of those Hebrews a seed of poetry, and a halo of lurid glory round the head of their God, which awed the nation in its midnight tents. It has also given for the world a new charm and beauty to the rainbow, a subject of thought for the greatest genius, and an abiding sense of the enormity of vice, and the glory of virtue.

It can also be said with truth that, "upon the heights

of Mt. Sinai were kindled the fires of the Hebrew genius." Here we have the circumstance creating the narrative which has produced such a realm of thought. The law was given here to Moses; a law which in some form has molded governments and peoples since. And this—with the thunders amid which it was given, with the millions standing silent on the plain overwhelmed with awe and wonder, with the voice of the eternal heard ringing in their ears, the descent of the favored Moses with shining face, and tidings of the unknown future—exercised a potency on the minds and lives of the Hebrew race and the world's thinkers, unequalled by any literature. And without enlarging upon the numerous instances of Scripture such as the book of Job, of Isaiah, and of the Psalms, whose literary fruits are matchless creations of imaginative fancy and sublimest truth, we may mention the inimitable sermon on the mount, and the incomparable scene on Calvary's cross. The former contains conceptions sublime, diction of matchless beauty, words of regal simplicity, studded with favors divine, as the stars adorn the dark blue sky. And the latter scene of sacrificial love and life has contained the germ of the best of the world's literature for 2,000 years. These undying words written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" have become symbolic of the universal supremacy the despised Nazarene should have in all the nations of the earth.

Indeed, compare these utterances and their universal sweep and swelling life with the tongueless silence, and the dust-covered pages of ancient day, or the evan-

escent scrolls of modern hour, and they are as a bed of roses to a sand heap. Yes! Sweet is the scent, and precious the fruit of Burns' famous "Mary in Heaven." But only as the pansy to the rose, the fitful firefly to the majestic sun is it when compared with the twenty-third Psalm, and when compared with the book of Job it is as ashes to apples. Beautiful and true are Shakespeare's Perdita and Imogen. But in sacrificial character they could not make one hem of a garment for the reclaimed Mary Magdalene, or the devout and gentle Dorcas. For all the odors of divine love had sweetened their sin-embittered lives, and the beauty of Christian holiness had clothed them in the robe of celestial devotion to humanity, which fadeth not away.

And time would fail me to tell you how that as literature it is the book of the poor and lowly, the crutch to the aged, the eye to the blind, the child's own book, as well as literature superior to all the books of earth, and an exhaustless source of intellectual food for the most gigantic mind. Why, its every voice is a creation; its truth gleams and glitters in matchless poetic splendor; it beams light on midnight darkness. Its garment has the charming beauty of fiction. It has pressed into its service the whole realm of nature—the trees and the beasts of the forest, the flowers of the field, the stars in their courses, and the fishes in the fathomless sea. And yet the small mind says "the Bible is a book of no literary merit." But the peerless British orator, John Bright, said, "It is the source of my wealth of diction, and the wings of my oratory." Coleridge said, "Study of the Bible will save any man from a vulgar style."

Huxley said, "It is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of a literary form." Sir Matthew Hale, the greatest of jurists, said, "There is no book in the world like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use." And that greatest of American statesmen and scholars, Daniel Webster, said of it, "If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended it is due to my kind parents instilling into my mind an early love of the Bible."

In view of these facts we ask, "What is the Bible to us as literature?" And I answer "matchless."

Second. Its influence upon art is as exceptional and excellent as upon literature. The fine arts are architecture, sculpture, painting, and music. It may surprise us to learn that the renaissance of art has always been contemporaneous with the exaltation of religion. Taine, Lotze, and Lord, and others of the best living authorities upon the history of art tell us that the arts lost their grossness and reached their grandeur when their models were religious characters, and their purposes were Christian. Michael Angelo, the prince of sculpture and painting, revealed that the creation of character, and not merely grace and beauty in form is the highest glory of art. Hence he and Raphael became, and are still, the world's masters. And in those sturdy, noble characters of Scripture, in the holy purposes of religious architecture were found the noblest ideals. Where is to be found the acknowledged realm of art to-day? If we agree with the best critics we will answer, "In that which creates, imitates, suggests, and reveals the spiritual." Hence the reason why the living

pictures of to-day are a degradation of true art as also of good morals. The worth of the famous statuary by Michael Angelo called "The Laocoon" and the "Dying Gladiator" is in the expression of pain, of despair, and of agony apparent; and not merely in the perfect outlines of the figures. And we repeat, the Scriptures and their holy purposes have been most fruitful in supplying these models and thus promoting the noblest art. In architectural sublimity and complexity, in the power of suggesting and expressing spiritual aspirations, what can surpass the Christian cathedrals of the middle ages?

In far-sought splendor, in their influence for devotional enchantment, in matchless architectural array, there tower high over all, St. Mark's church at Venice, St. Peter's at Rome, York Minster and St. Paul's in London, which are the cream of the world's art, and the monuments of matchless architecture.

Michael Angelo's statues of Moses, the Madonna and her child, the rugged John the Baptist, lonely and lovely in the greatness of his moral strength, have been the wonder of admiring artists for three hundred years.

The greatest single picture in the world to-day hangs high on the wall of the Sixtine chapel in Rome, and is Angelo's fresco of the Last Judgment. Still greater and grander is the artistic triumph by the same master. It is a painting on the ceiling of this same chapel and is divided into nine fields or groups. They are judged the creative marvels of genius, the indescribable and inimitable in painting. But whence came they? From nature? No: Genius knows nature has no moral characteristics. From the works of the free thinking infidel

who says, "Religion is the death of thought and the grave of learning and art"? No: Genius is aware there is no spot on earth more sterile and barren of mental stimulus than that. Let the sceptical hear it, and believe. They came from this grand old book—the Bible. From the despised Bible story of creation came the first five; the sacrifice of Cain and Abel provides another; the story of the deluge inspires one more; the Hebrew prophets give one; and the story of David and Goliath, and the ancestors of Christ supply the rest. And the creations suggested to Angelo were continued in Raphael and others, until the inspiration of the Scriptures sits enthroned in art, and the thinking, dreaming, worshipping world beholds it in wonder and amazement.

And music, as well as art and architecture, pays tribute to the exceptional inspiration of this book. Hadyn's "Creation," the "Darkness," his chorus of the "Israel in Egypt"; Beethoven's "Mass," and "Pastoral"; and Handel's "Messiah" arose from the slumbering fires in those ethereal muses just as the breath of these inspiring incidents of Scripture enkindled the flames. And thus the development, sublimity, and majesty of the best architecture; the beauty and perfection of the master pieces of sculpture and painting; the majestic harmonies of the illustrious muses, are all indebted to, and inseparably associated with Bible truth and tale.

So again we ask, "What is the Bible to us?" And we are compelled to reply, "The book in its inspiration of the arts, unequalled."

Third. Notice its morality.

This is an age when people believe in men and morals, although that faith has not yet saturated this new world. This book is above all else a book of morality and religion. If its moral teachings are not superior to that of any other book it has no place in religion. This—to teach the world of morality unexampled, religion unparalleled—is its purpose in the world. As Galileo of old said, "The Bible is not given to teach us how the heavens go, but how sinful men may go to heaven." And in this book there are such pictures of moral heroes as the world has nowhere else seen. Do you seek for an example of manly meekness? Go to the Old Testament Scriptures, and on the outlines of its history you will find Moses. Does your fretful life long for one human pillar upon which you can lean for patience? Then turn to the Old Testament Scriptures, and you shall find in the dawn of their day that old fashioned man Job. Do the young wish to find a young man, who, amid the surges of the putrid streams of blasphemy and sensualism, retained his integrity? Then turn to even the early records of the Old Testament Scriptures, and you will find the pure and brave young man, Joseph. Do you desire to see how men of backbone have faced the evils of life, and declined to sell their souls for a dollar? Then turn to the pages of this book, and you will find heroic Elijah, dauntless Jeremiah, and the immovable Daniel. Do young ladies wish a female friend who possessed the beauty and grace of society charm, the gentleness of the dove with the sweetness of an angel, and without the

cunning and coyness of the fox? Then turn to the New Testament Scriptures where you will find the commendable Phoebe. If we desire a perfect man whose enemies even dared not say, "he sinned"; but around whose head there always shone a halo of moral glory, we may come to this book and behold the man Christ Jesus. Here friends is a gallery of living pictures, shining amid the light of the work-a-day world; but they stand high, and are lifted up into the niches for the noblest moral characters. And as such they have become well known to the world. Moses is as well known as Alexander the Great, or Julius Caesar. Elijah and Isaiah are as famous as John Milton. The apostle Paul is better known than Shakespeare. And we know more of Jesus of Nazareth than of Wm. E. Gladstone. Yet, they are known as colossal moral characters on the hilltops of history; fit finger posts to guide the world to highest moral purposes. The light of severest criticism has been turned upon them, but it only revealed them as beacon lights of purity upon the shores of time, and their bitterest opponents have not dared to charge them with conscious imposition.

And the character of the contents of the book is in harmony with that of its writers.

Its moral precepts when accepted have uplifted the fallen, cleansed the impure, softened stony hearts, made giants of the timid, and heroes of the morally weak, as the rugged rocks have sheltered from the storm, and the gentle zephyrs softened the gnarled petal, and lifted the head of the drooping flower.

I ask you where can be found as pure morality as in

the ten commandments? Where grander moral precepts than the sermon on the mount? Where as clear a code of charity and love as in Paul's sermon to the church in Corinth? Echo answers, "Where?" Sceptics answer, "Where?" and the united tongues of the honest hosts of a peopled universe answer "Nowhere."

Why, in these writings are the honesty of the world's millennium; the peace for the fiercest passions; generosity to the perdition deserving, and love for even the loveless. These have shaped the character of nations who have received them, and made the great heart of peoples beat towards each other in unison with the Bible born principle, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." And these truths made Diderot, the French sceptic and philosopher say, "No better lessons than these of the Bible can I teach my child." They made Huxley, the scientist and sceptic say, "In the Bible there is a vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur," and they made Thomas Jefferson say, "I have always said the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands."

Again we ask, "What is the Bible to us as a book of morals?" And we answer, "Unparalleled."

Fourth, "What is the Bible?" Its religion.

It is strange that in this age the essential distinction between morality and religion should be so much neglected by many who should certainly know better. Morality is humanity's rules for right living among men. Religion is man's relation to, and recognition of God. Therefore, a person may be moral and yet an infidel; al-

though history shows if a moral character is entirely removed from religious laws and observances it will become immoral George Elliot and Ingersoll are illustrations of this truth. A woman who lives in an unmarried state as mistress of a man she calls husband is immoral; and George Elliot did that. A man who teaches that one should lie rather than suffer a little inconvenience or pain is immoral; and Ingersoll has repeatedly taught that. Such estimates as these of chastity and truth give force to the immoral factories of licentiousness and falsehood which are so ruinous to human integrity and fidelity.

The Bible teaches the highest possible form of religion. The fatherhood of God, the redemption of man through the living sacrifice of His Son; the brotherhood of the race through the elder brother Jesus Christ. Love to one another, and the whole race, opposition to all selfishness, and the embrace of rigid sacrifice are the demands made of His followers by the God of this book.

And these are the distinguishing principles of the religion of the Christian Scriptures, from all the other religions on this earth.

An infidel has said, "The gods are never greater than the people who make them." And in that sentence he described the gods of all other religions except the God of the Bible, the father of us all, the Savior of all who repent. The world has been 3,500 years striving to reach the inimitable religious precepts in this book, and is yet far from accomplishing the task. The word "father" is not even known in the religious books of Buddha, Confucius, Shinto, and Tao. The doctrine of brother-

hood in Buddha is never taught, and the Christian truth of "love one another" would be received by them as an insult and an outrage. Go to the Zenana huts upon the plains of India, where Buddhism in its various forms holds sway, and you will find the religion of forgiveness is unknown, and there, woman is treated no better than a galley slave, excepting by Christianity and Christians. Now, it is this spirit of love in the religion of the Bible, which is the religion of Jesus Christ, that proves the Bible supernatural and its religion divine. Yes, we glory that it has been founded on mingled love and mercy, purchased by the blood of Him whose name is love, and enthroned on the cross of Calvary, which is the cross of love. Myriads have misunderstood and travestied this religion of love taught in this old book, but its abiding conquests have been won in love, and all its glories are revealed through this love.

Mohammed triumphed by the sword, and even to-day the choice it is offering amid the protests of Christendom to those Armenians is, Moslemism or death. But the religion of this book pleads in the tones of a dove for the choice of the soul.

In the beautiful words of Dr. Storrs, "The religion of this Bible came to communities cultured in letters, instructed in arts, mighty in arms, but to a great extent morally rotten with luxury and lust. So infamous were they that the world to-day would expect the globe itself to open beneath such and swallow them up." But this religion in its worship, by its love, its humility, its inflexible fidelity to truth, and the heroic energy of its faith towards the invisible master Christ; without sword

or secular power struck lifeless this dissolute life and rose and spread over all its rays of peace, purity, and moral power as suns from the celestial world. And as Wm. H. Seward said "The whole hope of human progress has since become suspended on the ever growing influence of the Bible."

Long ago Christianity—the religion of this book—took possession of the western world, and resolved to transform it by this Word of God and its spirit of peace. Before its advent, Atheism, Brahmanism, Mohammedism, and theosophies called culture formed their battle ground in the East. Contrast their respective achievements, and you behold the word and love of the lowly Nazerene uplifting the barbaric Teutons, Gauls, Celts, and Saxons into industry and art, literature and science, pure morals and holy life; and they advanced from their state of naturalism to the heights of celestial glory; while with the others on yonder oriental hemisphere you see even to-day there hangs like a pall the veil of human degradation. The wheels of progress moved not by their force; life continued a stagnant pool, corrupt and corrupting all with its pestilential odors; fiercer and bloodier became their cruelties; higher and viler rose the tide of sensualism, until sensuous pleasures have become their promised paradise—their heaven. And note this well: never without this religion has one solitary page of history recorded the place where there reign true equality, liberty, and love. Therefore, as the religion of this Bible is the great sun and center of the world's bliss, whose rays dispel the darkness of sinful misery, reveal abiding happiness, pierce the night

of death, and reveal the dawn of eternal day, we conclude it is of divine inspiration. And no man dare attempt to quench this sun without scorching himself.

Thus because of its achievements in uplifting the human race; because Jesus Christ, its source and center, is "the purest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the pure"; because of the beauties of art it has evolved, and the harmonies of music it has supplied; because its literature is the purest light of the highest and noblest of life, it must be what no other book is—the inspired Word of the eternal God, the ocean of life which cleanses men, the light of truth which can alone lead man out of his ignorance and sin, through the mists and darkness of doubt and death into the realities, certainties, and harmonies of eternal life.

Therefore let me ask in the words of the poet Cowper:

> Now tell me dignified and sapient sir,
> My man of morals nurtured in the shade
> Of Academus, is this false or true?
> Is Christ the able teacher or the schools?
> If Christ, then why resort at every turn
> To Athens, or to Rome, for wisdom short
> Of man's occasions, when, in him reside
> Grace, knowledge, comfort, and unfathomed store?

I ask once more, "What is the Bible to us?" And shall we not all answer before heaven and in this presence in the words of the great statesman and scholar Daniel Webster, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a divine reality; that this Bible cannot be a human production." For its literature, its art, its morality, and its religion prove its divine inspiration.

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